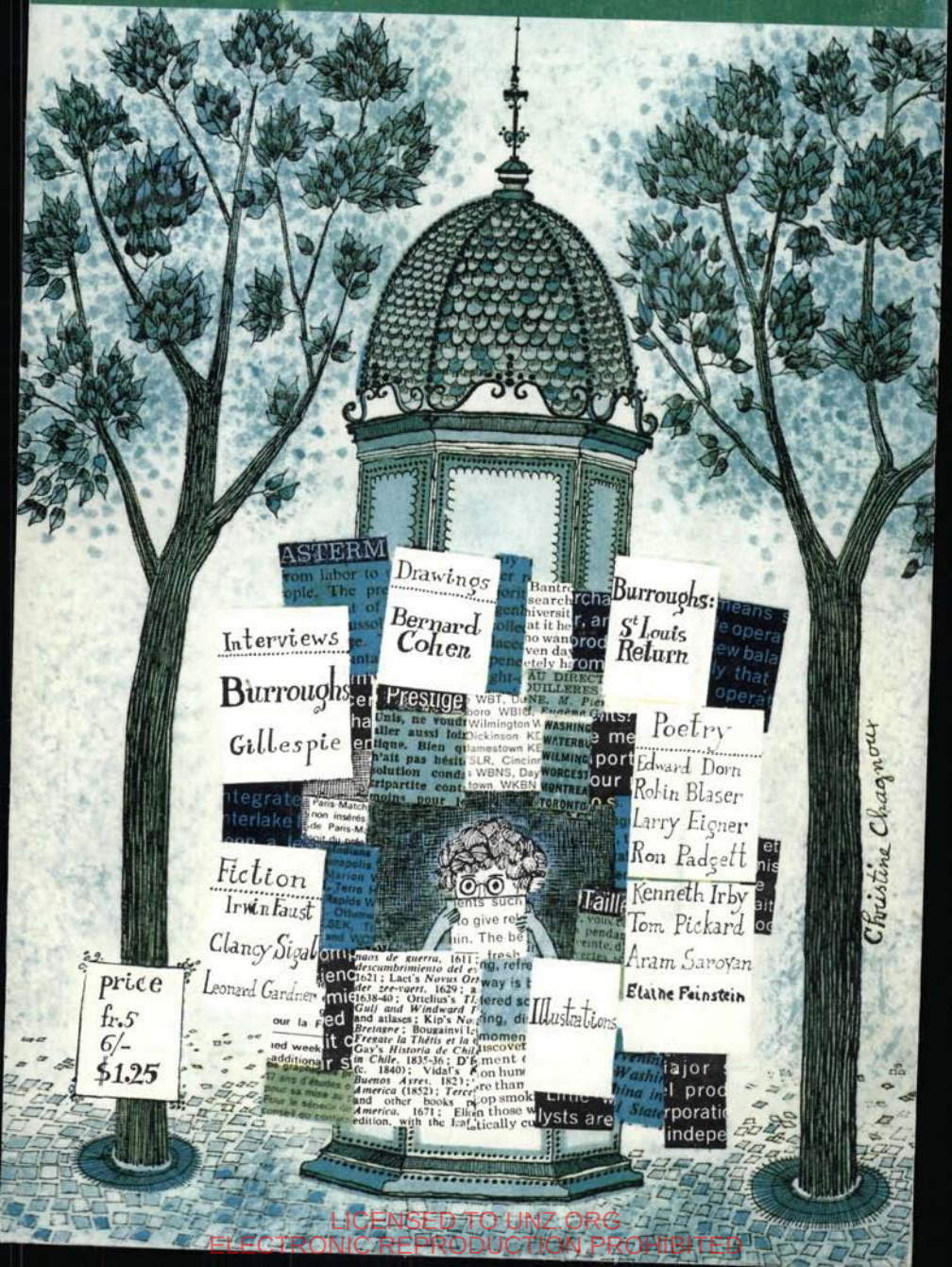
the PARIS REVIEW

35



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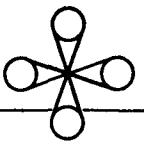

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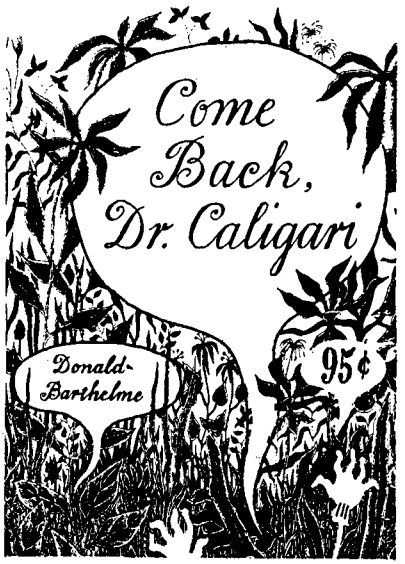

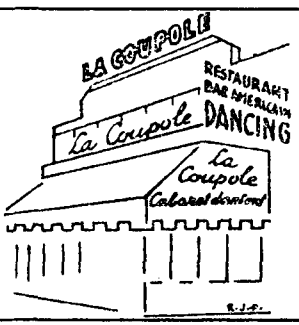

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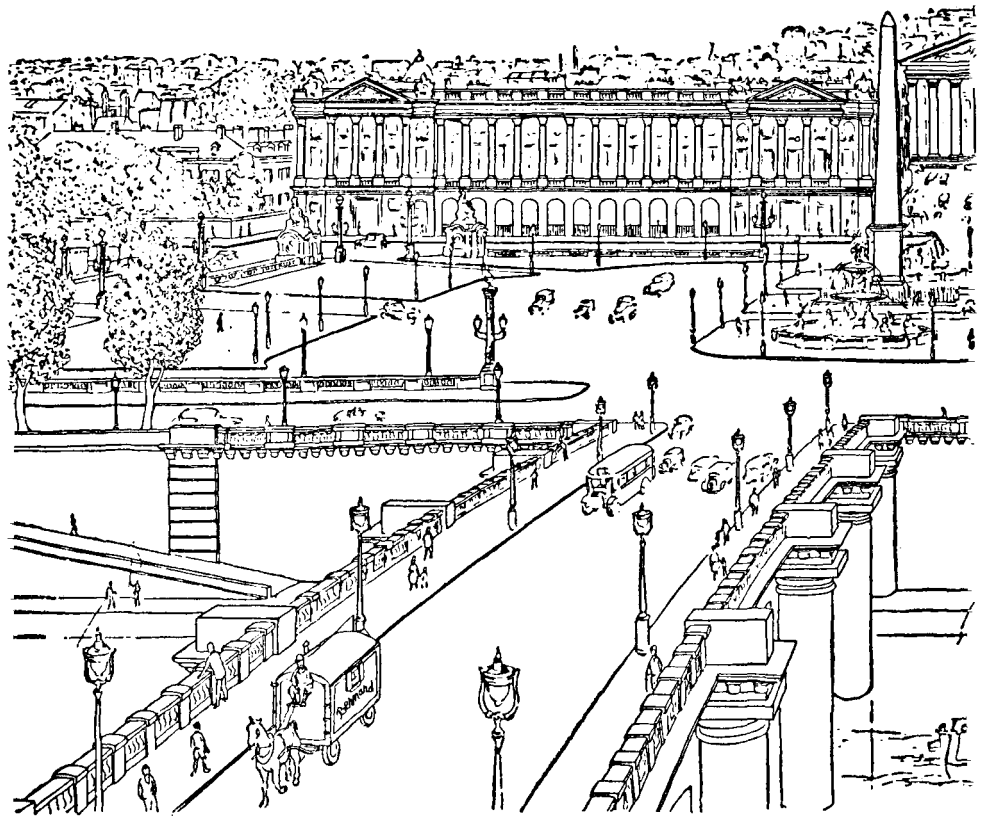

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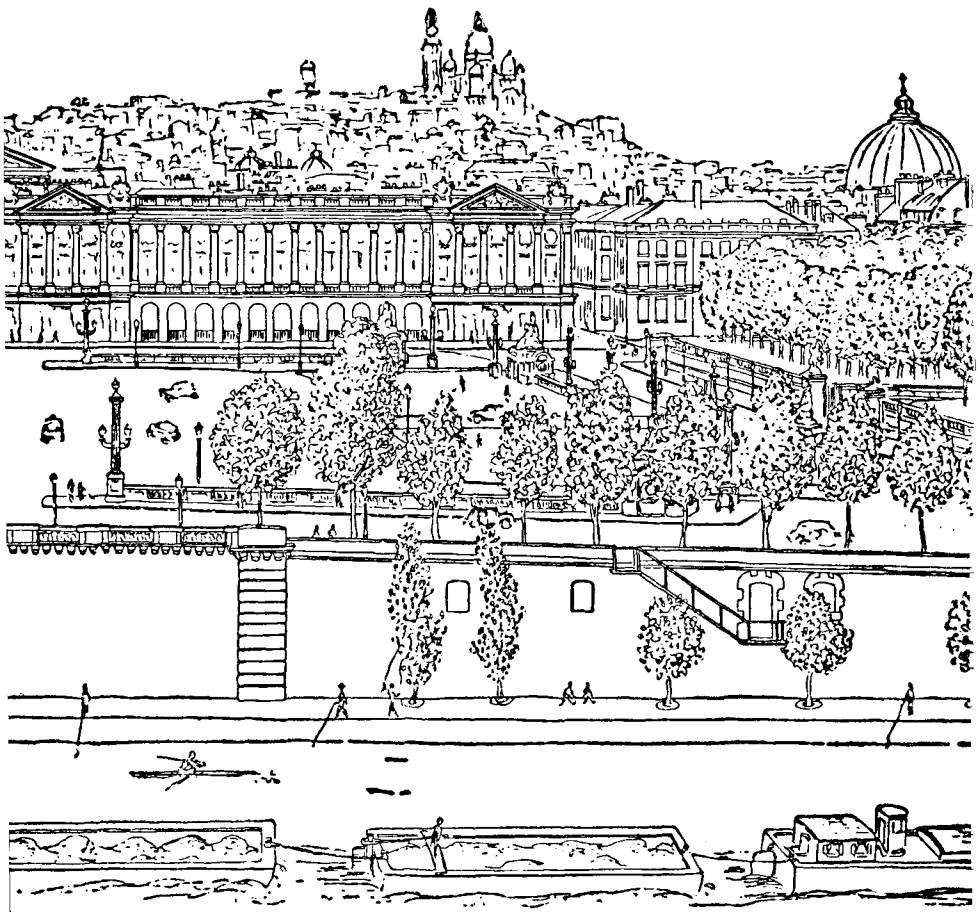

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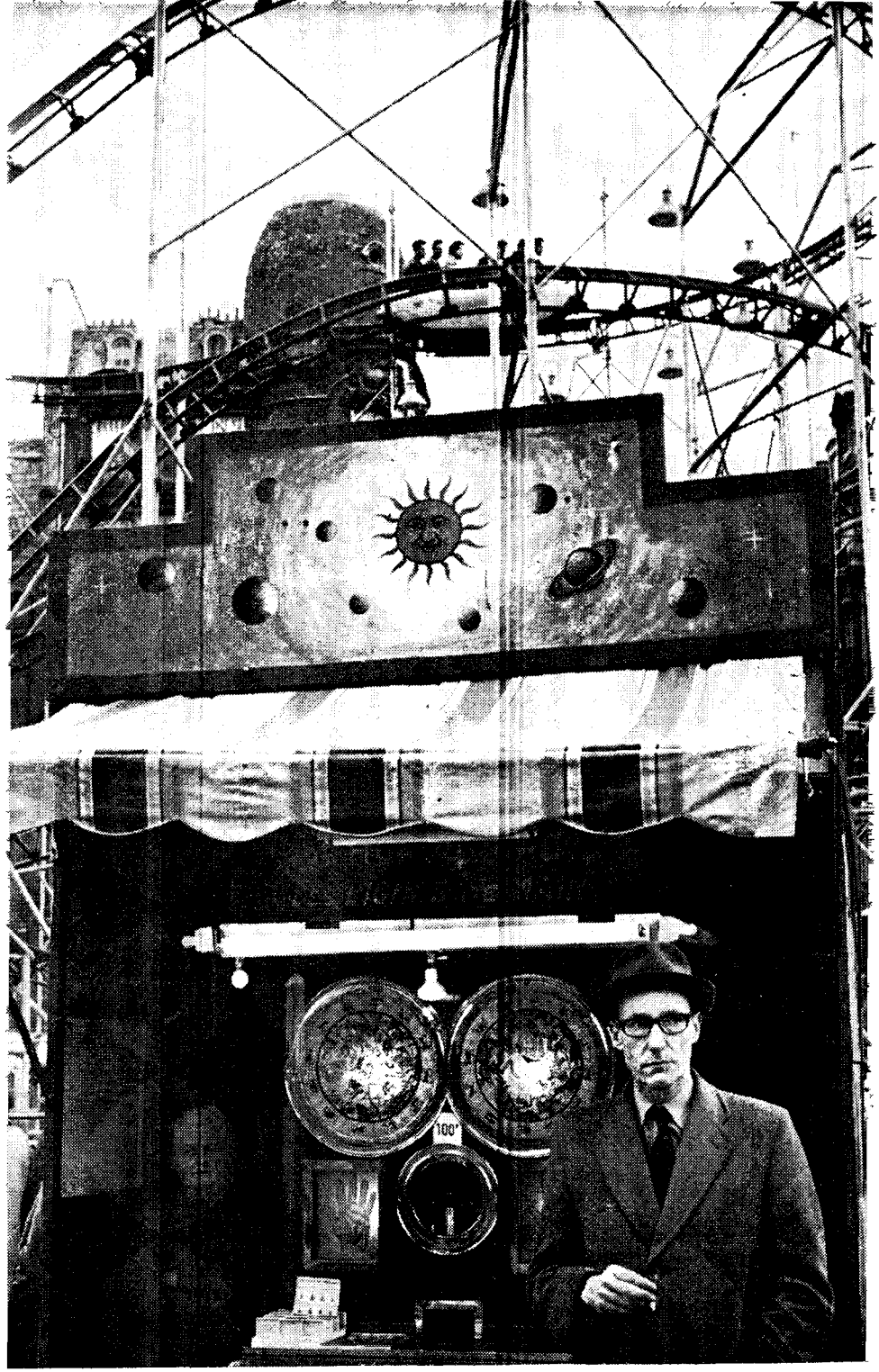

Burroughs in Paris, 1960 (Photo by Charles Henri Ford)

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The Art of Fiction XXXVI

William Burroughs

An Interview

*Firecrackers and whistles sounded the advent of the New Year of 1965 in St. Louis, and strip teasers ran from the bars in Gaslight Square to dance in the street when midnight came. William Seward Burroughs III, who had watched television alone that night, was asleep in his room at the Chase-Park Plaza Hotel, St. Louis' most elegant. After an absence of 20 years, he had returned to his birthplace from Tangier.**

At noon the next day he was ready for the interview. He wore a gray lightweight Brooks Brothers suit with vest, a blue-striped shirt from Gibraltar cut in the English style, and a deep blue tie with small white polka dots. His manner was not so much pedagogic as didactic or forensic. He might have been a senior partner in a private bank, charting the course of huge but anonymous fortunes. A friend of the interviewer, spotting him across the lobby, thought he was a British diplomat. At the age of 50, he is trim; he performs

* *St. Louis Return*, on page 51 of this issue, is Burroughs' chronicle of his trip.

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a complex abdominal exercise daily and walks a good deal. His face carries no excess flesh. His expression is taut, and his features are intense and chiseled. He did not smile during the interview and laughed only once, but he gives the impression of being capable of much dry laughter under other circumstances. His voice is sonorous, its tone reasonable and patient; his accent is mid-Atlantic, the kind of regionless inflection Americans acquire after many years abroad. He speaks elliptically, in short, clear bursts.

On the dresser of his room sat a European transistor radio, several science fiction paperbacks, and Romance, *by Joseph Conrad;* The Day Lincoln Was Shot, *by Jim Bishop; and* Ghosts in American Houses, *by James Reynolds. A Zeiss Ikon camera in a scuffed leather case lay on one of the twin beds beside a copy of* Field & Stream. *On the other bed were a pair of long shears, clippings from newspaper society pages, photographs and a scrapbook on which he had been working when the interviewer arrived. He had begun three scrapbooks several months earlier in Tangier. They consisted of typed material, photographs, and printed matter* en collage *in French ledger books. One was devoted to Gibraltar, and the other two to general subjects. A Facit portable typewriter sat on the desk, and gradually one became aware that the room, although neat, contained a great deal of paper.*

After a brief discussion of the use of the tape recorder to prepare cut-up interviews, he settled in a chair next to a window. He smoked incessantly, alternating between a box of English Ovals and a box of Benson & Hedges. As the interview progressed, the room filled with smoke. He opened the window. The temperature outside was 70 degrees, the warmest New Year's Day in St. Louis history; a yellowjacket flew in and settled on the pane. The 12th-story room overlooked the ample roofs of the houses on a series of private streets with gates at both ends, once the most substantial neighborhood in St. Louis. In one of these homes, at 4664 Pershing Avenue, he had been born. The bright afternoon deepened. The faint cries of children rose up from the broad brick alleys in which he had played as a boy.

INTERVIEWER

You grew up here?

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BURROUGHS

Yes. I went to John Burroughs School and the Taylor School, and was out West for a bit, and then went to Harvard.

INTERVIEWER

Any relation to the adding machine firm?

BURROUGHS

My grandfather. You see, he didn't exactly invent the adding machine, but he invented the gimmick that made it work, namely, a cylinder full of oil and a perforated piston that will always move up and down at the same rate of speed. Very simple principle, like most inventions. And it gave me a little money, not much, but a little.

INTERVIEWER

What did you do at Harvard?

BURROUGHS

Studied English Lit. John Livingston Lowes. Whiting. I sat in on Kittredge's course. Those are the main people I recall. I lived in Adams House and then I got fed up with the food and I moved to Claverly Hall, where I lived the last two years. I didn't do any writing in college.

INTERVIEWER

When and why did you start to write?

BURROUGHS

I started to write about 1950; I was 35 at the time; there didn't seem to be any strong motivation. I simply was endeavoring to put down in a more or less straightforward journalistic style something about my experiences with addiction and addicts.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you feel compelled to record these experiences?

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BURROUGHS

I didn't feel compelled. I had nothing else to do. Writing gave me something to do every day. I don't feel the results were at all spectacular. *Junkie* is not much of a book, actually. I knew very little about writing at that time.

INTERVIEWER

Where was this?

BURROUGHS

In Mexico City. I was living near Sears Roebuck, right around the corner from the University of Mexico. I had been in the army four or five months and I was there on the GI Bill, studying native dialects. I went to Mexico partly because things were becoming so difficult with the drug situation in America. Getting drugs in Mexico was quite easy, so I didn't have to rush around, and there wasn't any pressure from the law.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you start taking drugs?

BURROUGHS

Well, I was just bored. I didn't seem to have much interest in becoming a successful advertising executive or whatever, or living the kind of life Harvard designs for you. After I became addicted in New York in 1944, things began to happen. I got in some trouble with the law, got married, moved to New Orleans and then went to Mexico.

INTERVIEWER

There seems to be a great deal of middle-class voyeurism in this country concerning addiction, and in the literary world, downright reverence for the addict. You apparently don't share these points of view.

BURROUGHS

No, most of it is nonsense. I think drugs are interesting

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principally as chemical means of altering metabolism and thereby altering what we call reality, which I would define as a more or less constant scanning pattern.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think of the hallucinogens and the new psychedelic drugs—LSD-25?

BURROUGHS

I think they're extremely dangerous, much more dangerous than heroin. They can produce overwhelming anxiety states. I've seen people try to throw themselves out of windows; whereas the heroin addict is mainly interested in staring at his own toe. Other than deprivation of the drug, the main threat to him is an overdose. I've tried most of the hallucinogens, without an anxiety reaction, fortunately. LSD-25 produced results for me similar to mescaline. Like all hallucinogens, LSD gave me an increased awareness, more a hallucinated viewpoint than any actual hallucination. You might look at a door knob and it will appear to revolve, although you are conscious that this is the result of the drug. Also, Van Goghish colors, with all those swirls, and the crackle of the universe.

INTERVIEWER

Have you read Henri Michaux's book on mescaline?

BURROUGHS

His idea was to go into his room and close the door and hold in the experiences. I had my most interesting experiences with mescaline when I got outdoors and walked around—colors, sunsets, gardens. It produces a terrible hangover, though, nasty stuff. It makes one ill and interferes with coordination. I've had all the interesting effects I need, and I don't want any repetition of those extremely unpleasant physical reactions.

INTERVIEWER

The visions of drugs and the visions of art don't mix?

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BURROUGHS

Never. The hallucinogens produce visionary states, sort of, but morphine and its derivatives decrease awareness of inner processes, thoughts and feelings. They are pain killers, pure and simple. They are absolutely contraindicated for creative work, and I include in the lot alcohol, morphine, barbiturates, tranquilizers—the whole spectrum of sedative drugs. As for visions and heroin, I had a hallucinatory period at the very beginning of addiction, for instance, a sense of moving at high speed through space, but as soon as addiction was established, I had no visions—vision—at all and very few dreams.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you stop taking drugs?

BURROUGHS

I was living in Tangier in 1957, and I had spent a month in a tiny room in the Casbah staring at the toe of my foot. The room had filled up with empty Eukodol cartons; I suddenly realized I was not doing *anything*. I was dying. I was just apt to be finished. So I flew to London and turned myself over to Dr. John Yerbury Dent for treatment. I'd heard of his success with the apomorphine treatment. Apomorphine is simply morphine boiled in hydrochloric acid; it's non-addicting. What the apomorphine did was to regulate my metabolism. It's a metabolic regulator. It cured me physiologically. I'd already taken the cure once at Lexington, and although I was off drugs when I got out, there was a physiological residue. Apomorphine eliminated that. I've been trying to get people in this country interested in it, but without much luck. The vast majority—social workers, doctors—have the cop's mentality toward addiction. A probation officer in California wrote me recently to inquire about the apomorphine treatment. I'll answer him at length. I always answer letters like that.

INTERVIEWER

Have you had any relapses?

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BURROUGHS

Yes, a couple. Short. Both were straightened out with apomorphine and now heroin is no temptation for me. I'm just not interested. I've seen a lot of it around. I know people who are addicts. I don't have to use any will power. Dr. Dent always said there is no such thing as will power. You've got to reach a state of mind in which you don't want it or need it.

INTERVIEWER

You regard addiction as an illness, but also a central human fact, a drama?

BURROUGHS

Both, absolutely. It's as simple as the way in which anyone happens to become an alcoholic. They start drinking, that's all. They like it, and they drink, and then they become alcoholic. I was exposed to heroin in New York—that is, I was going around with people who were using it; I took it; the effects were pleasant. I went on using it and became addicted. Remember that if it can be readily obtained, you will have any number of addicts. The idea that addiction is somehow a psychological illness is, I think, totally ridiculous. It's as psychological as malaria. It's a matter of exposure. People, generally speaking, will take any intoxicant or any drug that gives them a pleasant effect if it is available to them. In Iran, for instance, opium was sold in shops until quite recently, and they had 3 million addicts in a population of 20 million. There are also all forms of spiritual addiction. Anything that can be done chemically can be done in other ways, that is, if we have sufficient knowledge of the processes involved. Many policemen and narcotics agents are precisely addicted to power, to exercising a certain nasty kind of power over people who are helpless. The nasty sort of power: white junk I call it—rightness; they're right, right, right—and if they lost that power, they would suffer excruciating withdrawal symptoms. The picture we get of the whole Russian bureaucracy, people who are exclusively preoccupied

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with power and advantage, this must be an addiction. Suppose they lose it? Well, it's been their whole life.

INTERVIEWER

Can you amplify your idea of junk as image?

BURROUGHS

It's only a theory and, I feel, an inadequate one. I don't think anyone really understands what a narcotic is or how it works, how it kills pain. My idea is sort of a stab in the dark. As I see it, what has been damaged in pain is, of course, the image, and morphine must in some sense replace this. We know it blankets the cells and that addicts are practically immune to certain viruses, to influenza and respiratory complaints. This is simple, because the influenza virus has to make a hole in the cell receptors. When those are covered, as they are in morphine addiction, the virus can't get in. As soon as morphine is withdrawn, addicts will immediately come down with colds and often with influenza.

INTERVIEWER

Certain schizophrenics also resist respiratory disease.

BURROUGHS

A long time ago I suggested there were similarities in terminal addiction and terminal schizophrenia. That was why I made the suggestion that they addict these people to heroin, then withdraw it and see if they could be motivated; in other words, find out whether they'd walk across the room and pick up a syringe. Needless to say, I didn't get very far, but I think it would be interesting.

INTERVIEWER

Narcotics, then, disturb normal perception—

BURROUGHS

And set up instead a random craving for images. If drugs weren't forbidden in America, they would be the perfect

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middle-class vice. Addicts would do their work and come home to consume the huge dose of images awaiting them in the mass media. Junkies love to look at television. Billie Holiday said she knew she was going off drugs when she didn't like to watch TV. Or they'll sit and read a newspaper or magazine, and by God, read it all. I knew this old junkie in New York, and he'd go out and get a lot of newspapers and magazines and some candy bars and several packages of cigarettes and then he'd sit in his room and he'd read those newspapers and magazines right straight through. Indiscriminately. Every word.

INTERVIEWER

You seem primarily interested in bypassing the conscious, rational apparatus to which most writers direct their efforts.

BURROUGHS

I don't know about where fiction ordinarily directs itself, but I am quite deliberately addressing myself to the whole area of what we call dreams. Precisely what is a dream? A certain juxtaposition of word and image. I've recently done a lot of experiments with scrapbooks. I'll read in the newspaper something that reminds me of or has relation to something I've written. I'll cut out the picture or article and paste it in a scrapbook beside the words from my book. Or, I'll be walking down the street and I'll suddenly see a scene from my book and I'll photograph it and put it in a scrapbook. I'll show you some of those.* I've found that when preparing a page, I'll almost invariably dream that night something relating to this juxtaposition of word and image. In other words, I've been interested in precisely how word and image get around on very, very complex association lines. I do a lot of exercises in what I call time travel, in taking coordinates, such as what I photographed on the train, what I was thinking about at the time, what I was reading and what I wrote; all of this to see how completely I can project myself back to that one point in time.

* *See pages 22, 44, and 50.*

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Page from Burrough's Journal

INTERVIEWER

In *Nova Express*, you indicate that silence is a desirable state.

BURROUGHS

The *most* desirable state. In one sense a special use of words and pictures can conduce silence. The scrapbooks and time travel are exercises to expand consciousness, to teach me to think in association blocks rather than words. I've recently spent a little time studying hieroglyph systems, both the Egyp-

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tian and the Mayan. A whole block of associations—boonf!—like that! Words, at least the way we use them, can stand in the way of what I call non-body experience. It's time we thought about leaving the body behind.

INTERVIEWER

Marshall McLuhan said that you believed heroin was needed to turn the human body into an environment that includes the universe. But from what you've told me, you're not at all interested in turning the body into an environment.

BURROUGHS

No, junk narrows consciousness. The only benefit to me as a writer (aside from putting me into contact with the whole carny world) came to me after I went off it. What I want to do is to learn to see more of what's out there, to look outside, to achieve as far as possible a complete awareness of surroundings. Beckett wants to go inward. First he was in a bottle and now he is in the mud. I am aimed in the other direction—outward.

INTERVIEWER

Have you been able to think for any length of time in images, with the inner voice silent?

BURROUGHS

I'm becoming more proficient at it, partly through my work with scrapbooks and translating the connections between words and images. Try this. Carefully memorize the meaning of a passage, then read it; you'll find you can actually read it without the words making any sound whatever in the mind's ear. Extraordinary experience, and one that will carry over into dreams. When you start thinking in images, without words, you're well on the way.

INTERVIEWER

Why is the wordless state so desirable?

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BURROUGHS

I think it's the evolutionary trend. I think that words are an around-the-world, ox-cart way of doing things, awkward instruments, and they will be laid aside eventually, probably sooner than we think. This is something that will happen in the space age. Most serious writers refuse to make themselves available to the things that technology is doing. I've never been able to understand this sort of fear. Many of them are afraid of tape recorders and the idea of using any mechanical means for literary purposes seems to them some sort of a sacrilege. This is one objection to the cut-ups. There's been a lot of that, a sort of a superstitious reverence for the word. My God, they say, you can't cut up these words. Why *can't* I? I find it much easier to get interest in the cut-ups from people who are not writers—doctors, lawyers, or engineers, any open-minded, fairly intelligent person—than from those who are.

INTERVIEWER

How did you become interested in the cut-up technique?

BURROUGHS

A friend, Brion Gysin, an American poet and painter, who has lived in Europe for 30 years, was, as far as I know, the first to create cut-ups. His cut-up poem, "Minutes to Go," was broadcast by the BBC and later published in a pamphlet. I was in Paris in the summer of 1960; this was after the publication there of *Naked Lunch*. I became interested in the possibilities of this technique, and I began experimenting myself. Of course, when you think of it, "The Waste Land" was the first great cut-up collage, and Tristan Tzara had done a bit along the same lines. Dos Passos used the same idea in "The Camera Eye" sequences in *U.S.A.* I felt I had been working toward the same goal; thus it was a major revelation to me when I actually saw it being done.

INTERVIEWER

What do cut-ups offer the reader that conventional narrative doesn't?

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BURROUGHS

Any narrative passage or any passage, say, of poetic images is subject to any number of variations, all of which may be interesting and valid in their own right. A page of Rimbaud cut up and rearranged will give you quite new images. Rimbaud images—real Rimbaud images—but new ones.

INTERVIEWER

You deplore the accumulation of images and at the same time you seem to be looking for new ones.

BURROUGHS

Yes, it's part of the paradox of anyone who is working with word and image, and after all, that is what a writer is still doing. Painter too. Cut-ups establish new connections between images, and one's range of vision consequently expands.

INTERVIEWER

Instead of going to the trouble of working with scissors and all those pieces of paper, couldn't you obtain the same effect by simply free-associating at the typewriter?

BURROUGHS

One's mind can't cover it that way. Now, for example, if I wanted to make a cut-up of this (*picking up a copy of* The Nation), there are many ways I could do it. I could read cross-column; I could say: "Today's men's nerves surround us. Each technological extension gone outside is electrical involves an act of collective environment. The human nervous environment system itself can be reprogrammed with all its private and social values because it is content. He programs logically as readily as any radio net is swallowed by the new environment. The sensory order." You find it often makes quite as much sense as the original. You learn to leave out words and to make connections. *(Gesturing)* Suppose I should cut this down the middle here, and put this up here. Your mind simply could not manage it. It's like trying to

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keep so many chess moves in mind, you just couldn't do it. The mental mechanisms of repression and selection are also operating against you.

INTERVIEWER

You believe that an audience can be eventually trained to respond to cut-ups?

BURROUGHS

Of course, because cut-ups make explicit a psycho-sensory process that is going on all the time anyway. Somebody is reading a newspaper, and his eye follows the column in the proper Aristotelian manner, one idea and sentence at a time. But subliminally he is reading the columns on either side and is aware of the person sitting next to him. That's a cut-up. I was sitting in a lunchroom in New York having my doughnuts and coffee. I was thinking that one *does* feel a little boxed in New York, like living in a series of boxes. I looked out the window and there was a great big Yale truck. That's cut-up—a juxtaposition of what's happening outside and what you're thinking of. I make this a practice when I walk down the street. I'll say, when I got to here I saw that sign; I was thinking this, and when I return to the house I'll type these up. Some of this material I use and some I don't. I have literally thousands of pages of notes here, raw, and I keep a diary as well. In a sense it's travelling in time.

Most people don't see what's going on around them. That's my principal message to writers: for God's sake, keep your *eyes* open. Notice what's going on around you. I mean, I walk down the street with friends. I ask, "Did you see him, that person who just walked by?" No, they didn't notice him. I had a very pleasant time on the train coming out here. I haven't travelled on trains in years. I found there were no drawing rooms. I got a bedroom so I could set up my typewriter and look out the window. I was taking photos, too. I also noticed all the signs and what I was thinking at the time, you see. And I got some extraordinary juxtapositions. For example, a friend of mine has a loft apartment in New

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York. He said, "Every time we go out of the house and come back, if we leave the bathroom door open, there's a rat in the house." I look out the window, there's Able Pest Control.

INTERVIEWER

The one flaw in the cut-up argument seems to lie in the linguistic base on which we operate, the straight declarative sentence. It's going to take a great deal to change that.

BURROUGHS

Yes, it is unfortunately one of the great errors of Western thought, the whole either-or proposition. You remember Korzybsky and his idea of non-Aristotelian logic. Either-or thinking just is not accurate thinking. That's not the way things occur, and I feel the Aristotelian construct is one of the great shackles of Western civilization. Cut-ups are a movement toward breaking this down. I should imagine it would be much easier to find acceptance of the cut-ups from, possibly, the Chinese, because you see already there are many ways that they can read any given ideograph. It's already cut up.

INTERVIEWER

What will happen to the straight plot in fiction?

BURROUGHS

Plot has always had the definite function of stage direction, of getting the characters from here to there, and that will continue, but the new techniques such as cut-up will involve much more of the total capacity of the observer. It enriches the whole esthetic experience, extends it.

INTERVIEWER

Nova Express is a cut-up of many writers?

BURROUGHS

Joyce is in there. Shakespeare, Rimbaud, some writers that people haven't heard about, someone named Jack Stern.

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There's Kerouac. I don't know, when you start making these fold-ins and cut-ups you lose track. Genet, of course, is someone I admire very much. But what he's doing is classical French prose. He's not a verbal innovator. Also Kafka, Eliot, and one of my favorites is Joseph Conrad. My story, "They Just Fade Away," is a fold-in (instead of cutting, you fold) from *Lord Jim*. In fact, it's almost a retelling of the *Lord Jim* story. My Stein is the same Stein as in *Lord Jim*. Richard Hughes is another favorite of mine. And Graham Greene. For exercise, when I make a trip, such as from Tangier to Gibraltar, I will record this in three columns in a notebook I always take with me. One column will contain simply an account of the trip, what happened. I arrived at the air terminal, what was said by the clerks, what I overheard on the plane, what hotel I checked into. The next column presents my memories; that is, what I was thinking of at the time, the memories that were activated by my encounters; and the third column, which I call my reading column, gives quotations from any book that I take with me. I have practically a whole novel alone on my trips to Gibraltar. Besides Graham Greene, I've used other books. I used *The Wonderful Country* by Tom Lea on one trip. Let's see, and Eliot's *The Cocktail Party; In Hazard* by Richard Hughes. For example, I'm reading *The Wonderful Country* and the hero is just crossing the frontier into Mexico. Well, just at this point I come to the Spanish frontier, so I note that down in the margin. Or I'm on a boat or a train, and I'm reading *The Quiet American*. I look around and see if there's a quiet American aboard. Sure enough, there's a quiet sort of young American with a crew-cut drinking a bottle of beer. It's extraordinary, if you really keep your eyes open. I was reading Raymond Chandler, and one of his characters was an albino gunman. My God, if there wasn't an albino in the room. He wasn't a gunman.

Who else? Wait a minute, I'll just check my coordinate books to see if there's anyone I've forgotten—Conrad, Richard Hughes, science fiction, quite a bit of science fiction. Eric Frank Russell has written some very, very interesting books. Here's one, *The Star Virus;* I doubt if you've heard of

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it. He develops a concept here of what he calls "Deadliners" who have this strange sort of seedy look. I read this when I was in Gibraltar, and I began to find Deadliners all over the place. The story has a fish pond in it, and quite a flower garden. My father was always very interested in gardening.

INTERVIEWER

In view of all this, what will happen to fiction in the next twenty-five years?

BURROUGHS

In the first place, I think there's going to be more and more merging of art and science. Scientists are already studying the creative process, and I think the whole line between art and science will break down and that scientists, I hope, will become more creative and writers more scientific. And I see no reason why the artistic world can't absolutely merge with Madison Avenue. Pop art is a move in that direction. Why can't we have advertisements with beautiful words and beautiful images? Already some of the very beautiful color photography appears in whiskey ads, I notice. Science will also discover for us how association blocks actually form.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think this will destroy the magic?

BURROUGHS

Not at all. I would say it would enhance it.

INTERVIEWER

Have you done anything with computers?

BURROUGHS

I've not done anything, but I've seen some of the computer poetry. I can take one of those computer poems and then try to find correlatives of it, that is, pictures to go with it; it's quite possible.

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INTERVIEWER

Does the fact that it comes from a machine diminish its value to you?

BURROUGHS

I think that any artistic product must stand or fall on what's there.

INTERVIEWER

Therefore, you're not upset by the fact that a chimpanzee can do an abstract painting?

BURROUGHS

If he does a good one, no. People say to me, "Oh, this is all very good, but you got it by cutting up." I say that has nothing to do with it, how I got it. What is any writing but a cut-up? Somebody has to program the machine; somebody has to *do* the cutting up. Remember that I first made selections. Out of hundreds of possible sentences that I might have used, I chose one.

INTERVIEWER

Incidentally, one image in *Nova Express* keeps coming back to me and I don't quite understand it: the gray room, "breaking through to the gray room."

BURROUGHS

I see that as very much like the photographic darkroom where the reality photographs are actually produced. Implicit in *Nova Express* is a theory that what we call reality is actually a movie. It's a film, what I call a biologic film. What has happened is that the underground and also the nova police have made a breakthrough past the guards and gotten into the darkroom where the films are processed, where they're in a position to expose negatives and prevent events from occurring. They're like police anywhere. All right, you've got a bad situation here in which the nova mob is about to blow up the planet. So the Heavy Metal Kid calls

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in the nova police. Once you get them in there, by God, they begin acting like any police. They're always an ambivalent agency. I recall once in South America that I complained to the police that a camera had been stolen and they ended up arresting me. I hadn't registered or something. In other words, once you get them on the scene they really start nosing around. Once the law starts asking questions, there's no end to it. For nova police, read technology, if you wish.

INTERVIEWER

Mary McCarthy has commented on the carnival origins of your characters in *Naked Lunch*. What are their other derivations?

BURROUGHS

The carny world was the one I exactly intended to create—a kind of mid-western, small-town, cracker-barrel, pratfall type of folklore, very much my own background. That world was an integral part of America and existed nowhere else, at least not in the same form. My family was southern on my mother's side. My grandfather was a circuit-riding Methodist minister with 13 children. Most of them went up to New York and became quite successful in advertising and public relations. One of them, an uncle, was a master image-maker, Ivy Lee, Rockefeller's publicity manager.

INTERVIEWER

Is it true that you did a great deal of acting out to create your characters when you were finishing *Naked Lunch?*

BURROUGHS

Excuse me, there is no accurate description of the creation of a book, or an event. Read Durrell's Alexandria novels for four different ways of looking at the same thing. Gysin saw me pasting pictures on the wall of a Paris hotel room and using a tape recorder to act out several voices. Actually, it was written mainly in Tangier, after I had taken the cure with Dr. Dent in London in 1957. I came back to Tangier and I started

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working on a lot of notes that I had made over a period of years. Most of the book was written at that time. I went to Paris about 1959, and I had a great pile of manuscripts. Girodias was interested and he asked if I could get the book ready in two weeks. This is the period that Brion is referring to when, from manuscripts collected over a period of years, I assembled what became the book from some thousand pages, something like that.

INTERVIEWER

But did you actually leap up and act out, say, Dr. Benway?

BURROUGHS

Yes, I have. Dr. Benway dates back to a story I wrote in 1938 with a friend of mine, Kells Elvins, who is now dead. That's about the only piece of writing I did prior to *Junkie*. And we did definitely act the thing out. We decided that was the way to write. Now here's this guy, what does he say, what does he do? Dr. Benway sort of emerged quite spontaneously while we were composing this piece. Something I've been meaning to do with my scrapbooks is to have files on every character, almost like police files: habits, idiosyncrasies, where born, pictures. That is, if I ever see anyone in a magazine or newspaper who looks like Dr. Benway (and several people have played Dr. Benway, sort of amateur actors), I take their photographs. Many of my characters first come through strongly to me as voices. That's why I use a tape recorder. They also carry over from one book to another.

INTERVIEWER

Do any have their origins in actual persons?

BURROUGHS

Hamburger Mary is one. There was a place in New York called Hamburger Mary's. I was in Hamburger Mary's when a friend gave me a batch of morphine syrettes. That was my first experience with morphine and then I built up a whole

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picture of Hamburger Mary. She is also an actual person. I don't like to give her name for fear of being sued for libel, but she was a Scientologist who started out in a hamburger joint in Portland, Oregon, and now has eleven million dollars.

INTERVIEWER

What about the Heavy Metal Kid?

BURROUGHS

There again, quite complicated origins, partly based on my own experience. I felt that heavy metal was sort of the ultimate expression of addiction, that there's something actually metallic in addiction, that the final stage reached is not so much vegetable as mineral. It's increasingly inanimate, in any case. You see, as Dr. Benway said, I've now decided that junk is not green, but blue. Some of my characters come to me in dreams, Daddy Long Legs, for instance. Once, in a clinic, I had a dream in which I saw a man in this rundown clinic and his name in the dream was Daddy Long Legs. Many characters have come to me like that in a dream, and then I'll elaborate from there. I always write down all my dreams. That's why I've got that notebook beside the bed there.

INTERVIEWER

Earlier you mentioned that if junk had done nothing else, it at least put you in contact with the carny world.

BURROUGHS

Yes, the underworld, the old time thieves, pickpockets and people like that. They're a dying race; very few of those old timers left. Yeah, well, they were show business.

INTERVIEWER

What's the difference between the modern junkie versus the 1944 junkie?

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BURROUGHS

For one thing, all these young addicts; that was quite unknown in 1944. Most of the ones I knew were middle-aged men or old. I knew some of the old-time pickpockets and sneak thieves and short-change artists. They had something called The Bill, a short-change deal. I've never been able to figure out how it works. One man I knew beat all the cashiers in Grand Central with this thing. It starts with a $20 bill. You give them a $20 bill and then when you get the change you say, "Well, wait a minute, I must have been dreaming, I've got the change after all." First thing you know, the cashier's short $10. One day this short-change artist went to Grand Central, even though he knew it was burned down, but he wanted to change $20. Well, a guy got on the buzzer and they arrested him. When they got up in court and tried to explain what had happened, none of them could do it. I keep stories like this in my files.

INTERVIEWER

In your apartment in Tangier?

BURROUGHS

No, all of it is right here in this room.

INTERVIEWER

In case Tangier is blown up, it's all safe?

BURROUGHS

Well, more than that. *I need it all.* I brought everything. That's why I have to travel by boat and by train, because, well, just to give you an idea, that's a photographic file *(thud)*. Those are all photographs and photographs. When I sit down to write, I may suddenly think of something I wrote three years ago which should be in this file over here. It may not be. I'm always looking through these files. That's why I need a place where I can really spread them out, to see what's what. I'm looking for one particular paper, it often takes me a long time and sometimes I don't find it. Those dresser

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drawers are full of files. All those drawers in the closets are full of files. It's pretty well organized. Here's a file, "The 1920 Movie," which partly contains some motion picture ideas. Here's "All the Sad Old Showmen"; has some business about bank robbers in it. Here's "The Nova Police Gazette." This is "Analog," which contains science fiction material. This is "The Captain's Logbook." I've been interested in sea stories, but I know so little about the sea, I hesitate to do much. I collect sea disasters such as the *Mary Celeste*. Here's a file on Mr. Luce.

INTERVIEWER

Do you admire Mr. Luce?

BURROUGHS

I don't admire him at all. He has set up one of the greatest word and image banks in the world. I mean, there are thousands of photos, thousands of words about anything and everything, all in his files. All the best pictures go into the files. Of course, they're reduced to micro-photos now. I've been interested in the Mayan system, which was a control calendar. You see, their calendar postulated really how everyone should feel at a given time, with lucky days, unlucky days, et cetera. And I feel that Luce's system is comparable to that. It is a control system. It has nothing to do with reporting. *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* is some sort of a police organization.

INTERVIEWER

You've said your next book will be about the American West and a gunfighter.

BURROUGHS

Yes, I've thought about this for years and I have hundreds of pages of notes on the whole concept of the gunfighter. The gun duel was a sort of Zen contest, a real spiritual contest like Zen swordsmanship.

INTERVIEWER

Would this be cut-up, or more a conventional narrative?

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BURROUGHS

I'd use cut-ups extensively in the preparation, because they would give me all sorts of facets of character and place, but the final version would be straight narrative. I wouldn't want to get bogged down in too much factual detail, but I'd like to do research in New Mexico or Arizona, even though the actual towns out there have become synthetic tourist attractions. Occasionally I have the sensation that I'm repeating myself in my work, and I would like to do something different—almost a deliberate change of style. I'm not sure if it's possible, but I want to try. I've been thinking about the western for years. As a boy I was sent to school in New Mexico, and during the war I was stationed in Coldspring, Texas, near Conroe. That's genuine backwoods country, and I picked up some real characters there. For instance, a fellow who actually lived in east Texas. He was always having trouble with his neighbors, who suspected him of rustling their cattle, I think with good reason. But he was competent with a gun and there wasn't anyone who would go up against him. He finally was killed. He got drunk and went to sleep under a tree by a campfire. The fire set fire to the tree, and it fell on him. I'm interested in extending newspaper and magazine formats to so-called literary materials. Here, this is one of my attempts. This is going to be published in a little magazine, *The Sparrow*.

INTERVIEWER

(Reading) "The Coldspring News, All the News That Fits We Print, Sunday, September 17, 1899, William Burroughs, Editor." Here's Bradley Martin again.

BURROUGHS

Yes, he's the gunfighter. I'm not sure yet what's going to happen after Clem accuses him of rustling cattle. I guess Clem goes into Coldspring and there's gunplay between him and the gunfighter. He's going to kill Clem, obviously. Clem is practically a dead man. Clem is going to get likkered up and think he can tangle with Bradley Martin, and Bradley Martin is going to kill him, that's for sure.

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INTERVIEWER

Will your other characters reappear? Dr. Benway?

BURROUGHS

He'd be the local doctor. That's what I'd like to do, you see, use all these characters in a straight western story. There would be Mr. Bradley Mr. Martin, whose name is Bradley Martin; there would be Dr. Benway; and we'd have the various traveling carny and medicine shows that come through with the Subliminal Kid and all of the con men. That was the heyday for those old joes.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think of the artist at all as being a con man?

BURROUGHS

In a sense. You see, a real con man is a creator. He creates a set. No, a con man is more a movie director than a writer. The Yellow Kid created a whole set, a whole cast of characters, a whole brokerage house, a whole bank. It was just like a movie studio.

INTERVIEWER

What about addicts?

BURROUGHS

Well, there will be a lot of morphine addiction. Remember that there were a great many addicts at that time. Jesse James was an addict. He started using morphine for a wound in his lung, and I don't know whether he was permanently addicted, but he tried to kill himself. He took 16 grains of morphine and it didn't kill him, which indicates a terrific tolerance. So he must have been fairly heavily addicted. A dumb, brutal hick; that's what he was, like Dillinger. And there were so many genteel old ladies who didn't feel right unless they had their Dr. Jones mixture every day.

INTERVIEWER

What about the Green Boy, Izzy the Push, Green Tony, Sammy the Butcher, and Willie the Fink?

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BURROUGHS

See, all of them could be western characters except Izzy the Push. The buildings weren't high enough in those days. Defenestration, incidentally, is a very interesting phenomenon. Some people who are prone to it will not live in high buildings. They get near a window, someone in the next room hears a cry, and they're gone. "Fell or jumped" is the phrase. I would add, "or was pushed."

INTERVIEWER

What other character types interest you?

BURROUGHS

Not the people in advertising and television, nor the American postman or middle class housewife; not the young man setting forth. The whole world of high finance interests me, the men such as Rockefeller who were specialized types of organisms that could exist in a certain environment. He was really a money-making machine, but I doubt that he could have made a dime today because he required the old laissez-faire capitalism. He was a specialized monopolistic organism. My uncle Ivy created images for him. I fail to understand why people like J. Paul Getty have to come on with such a stuffy, uninteresting image. He decides to write his life history. I've never read anything so dull, so absolutely devoid of any spark. Well, after all, he was quite a playboy in his youth. There must have been something going on. None of it's in the book. Here he is, the only man of enormous wealth who operates alone, but there's nobody to present the image. Well, yes, I wouldn't mind doing that sort of job myself. I'd like to take somebody like Getty and try to find an image for him that would be of some interest. If Getty wants to build an image, why doesn't he hire a first-class writer to write his story? For that matter, advertising has a long way to go. I'd like to see a story by Norman Mailer or John O'Hara which just makes some mention of a product, say, Southern Comfort. I can see the O'Hara story. It would be about someone who went into a bar and asked for Southern

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Comfort; they didn't have it, and he gets into a long, stupid argument with the bartender. It shouldn't be obtrusive; the story must be interesting in itself so that people read this just as they read any story in *Playboy*, and Southern Comfort would be guaranteed that people will look at that advertisement for a certain number of minutes. You see what I mean? They'll read the story. Now, there are many other ideas; you could have serialized comic strips, serial stories. Well, all we have to do is have James Bond smoking a certain brand of cigarettes.

INTERVIEWER

Didn't you once work for an advertising agency?

BURROUGHS

Yes, after I got out of Harvard in 1936. I had done some graduate work in anthropology. I got a glimpse of academic life and I didn't like it at all. It looked like there was too much faculty intrigue, faculty teas, cultivating the head of the department, so on and so forth. Then I spent a year as a copywriter in this small advertising agency, since defunct, in New York. We had a lot of rather weird accounts. There was some device called the Cascade for giving high colonics, and something called Endocreme. It was supposed to make women look younger, because it contained some female sex hormones. The Interstate Commerce Commission was never far behind. As you can see, I've recently thought a great deal about advertising. After all, they're doing the same sort of thing. They are concerned with the precise manipulation of word and image. Anyway, after the ad game I was in the army for a bit. Honorably discharged and then the usual strange wartime jobs—bartender, exterminator, reporter, and factory and office jobs. Then Mexico, a sinister place.

INTERVIEWER

Why sinister?

BURROUGHS

I was there during the Alemán regime. If you walked into

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a bar, there would be at least 15 people in there who were carrying guns. Everybody was carrying guns. They got drunk and they were a menace to any living creature. I mean, sitting in a cocktail lounge, you always had to be ready to hit the deck. I had a friend who was shot, killed. But he asked for it. He was waving his little .25 automatic around in a bar and some Mexican blasted him with a .45. They listed the death as natural causes, because the killer was a political big shot. There was no scandal, but it was really as much as your life was worth to go into a cocktail lounge. And I had that terrible accident with Joan Vollmer, my wife. I had a revolver that I was planning to sell to a friend. I was checking it over and it went off—killed her. A rumor started that I was trying to shoot a glass of champagne from her head William Tell style. Absurd and false. Then they had a big depistolization. Mexico City had one of the highest per-capita homicide rates in the world. Another thing, every time you turned around there was some Mexican cop with his hand out, finding some fault with your papers, or something, just anything he could latch onto. "Papers very bad, señor." It really was a bit much, the Alemán regime.

INTERVIEWER

From Mexico?

BURROUGHS

I went to Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador, just looking around. I was particularly interested in the Amazon region of Peru, where I took a drug called yage, *Bannisteria caapi*, an hallucinogen as powerful as mescaline, I believe. The whole trip gave me an awful lot of copy. A lot of these experiences went into *The Ticket That Exploded*, which is sort of midway between *Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine*. It's not a book I'm satisfied with in its present form. If it's published in the United States, I would have to rewrite it. *The Soft Machine*, which will come out here in due time, is an expansion of my South American experiences, with surreal extensions. When I rewrote it recently, I included about 65 pages of

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straight narrative concerning Dr. Benway, and the Sailor, and various characters from *Naked Lunch*. These people pop up everywhere.

INTERVIEWER

Then from South America you went to Europe. Is the geographic switch as important as it once was to American writing?

BURROUGHS

Well, if I hadn't covered a lot of ground, I wouldn't have encountered the extra dimensions of character and extremity that make the difference. But I think the day of the expatriate is definitely over. It's becoming more and more uncomfortable, more and more expensive, and less and less rewarding to live abroad, as far as I'm concerned. Now I'm particularly concerned with quiet writing conditions—being able to concentrate—and not so much interested in the place where I am. To me, Paris is now one of the most disagreeable cities in the world. I just hate it. The food is uneatable. It's either very expensive, or you just can't eat it. In order to get a good sandwich at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I have to get into a taxi and go all the way over to the Right Bank. Here all I have to do is pick up the phone. They send me up a club sandwich and a glass of buttermilk, which is all I want for lunch anyway. The French have gotten so nasty and they're getting nastier and nastier. The Algerian war and then all those millions of people dumped back into France and all of them thoroughly dissatisfied. I don't know, I think the atmosphere there is unpleasant and not conducive to anything. You can't get an apartment. You can't get a quiet place to work. Best you can do is a dinky hotel room somewhere. If I want to get something like this, it costs me $30 a day. The main thing I've found after 20 years away from St. Louis is that the standard of service is much better than New York. These are Claridge's or Ritz accommodations. If I could afford it, keep it, this would be an ideal place for me. There's not a sound in here. It's been very conducive to

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work. I've got a lot of room here to spread out all my papers in all these drawers and shelves. It's quiet. When I want something to eat, I pick up the phone. I can work right straight through. Get up in the morning, pick up the phone about 2 o'clock and have a sandwich, and work through till dinner time. Also, it's interesting to turn on the TV set every now and then.

INTERVIEWER

What do you find on it?

BURROUGHS

That's a *real* cut-up. It flickers, just like the old movies used to. When talkies came in and they perfected the image, the movies became as dull as looking out the window. A bunch of Italians in Rabat have a television station and we could get the signal in Tangier. I just sat there openmouthed looking at it. What with blurring and contractions and visual static, some of their westerns became very, very odd. Gysin has been experimenting with the flicker principle in a gadget he calls a "Dreamachine." There used to be one in the window of The English Bookshop on the Rue de Seine. Helena Rubenstein was so fascinated she bought a couple, and Harold Matson, the agent, thinks it's a million-dollar idea.

INTERVIEWER

Describe a typical day's work.

BURROUGHS

I get up about 9 o'clock and order breakfast; I hate to go out for breakfast. I work usually until about 2 o'clock or 2:30, when I like to have a sandwich and a glass of milk, which takes about ten minutes. I'll work through until 6 or 7 o'clock. Then if I'm seeing people or going out, I'll go out, have a few drinks, come back and maybe do a little reading and go to bed. I go to bed pretty early. I don't make myself work. It's just the thing I want to do. To be completely alone in a room, to know that there'll be no interruptions

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and I've got eight hours is just exactly what I want— yeah, just paradise.

INTERVIEWER

Do you compose on the typewriter?

BURROUGHS

I use the typewriter and I use scissors. I can sit down with scissors and old manuscripts and paste in photographs for hours; I have hundreds of photographs. I usually take a walk every day. Here in St. Louis I've been trying to take 1920 photographs, alleys and whatnot. This *(pointing)* is a ghostly photograph of the house in which I grew up, seen back through 45 years. Here's a photo of an old ash pit. It was great fun for children to get out there in the alley after Christmas and build a fire in the ash pit with all the excelsior and wrappings. Here, these are stories and pictures from the society columns. I've been doing a cut-up of society coverage. I had a lot of fun piling up these names; you get some improbable names in the society columns.

INTERVIEWER

You recently said you would like to settle in the Ozarks. Were you serious?

BURROUGHS

I would like to have a place there. It's a very beautiful area in the fall, and I'd like to spend periods of time, say every month or every two months, in complete solitude, just working, which requires an isolated situation. Of course, I'd have to buy a car, for one thing, and you run into considerable expense. I just have to think in terms of an apartment. I thought possibly an apartment here, but most likely I'll get one in New York. I'm not returning to Tangier. I just don't like it any more. It's become just a small town. There's no life there, and the place has no novelty for me at all. I was sitting there, and I thought, my God, I might as well be in Columbus, Ohio, as here, for all the interest that the town

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From the address book and memory of Mr. Rives Matthews of St. Louis M
and Tangier Morocco.

REPORTS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
WALTER WIRTHLIN

Happy New year Comte Hector Perrone de San Martine Mrs Edge at home last Thursday in May Fete Dieu,Principe de La Tour,Gentilhomo di Palazzo,your a long way from St.Louis..I had not thought death has undone so many..

Richard Halliburton,Tommy Elliot this music om the waters (off stage the Vieled Prophet Ball in St.Louis..Clock ticking away to a Victorian house

UNDER 3 FLAGS.

DESIGNED IN AMERICA

NORCROSS

A. REPORTER

Page from Burroughs' St. Louis Journal.

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has for me. I was just sitting in my apartment working. I could have a better apartment and better working conditions somewhere else. After 10 o'clock at night, there's no one on the streets. The old settlers like Paul Bowles and those people who have been there for years and years are sort os hanging on desperately asking, "Where could we go if we left Tangier?" I don't know, it just depresses me now. It's not even cheap there. If I travel anywhere, it will be to the Far East, but only for a visit. I've never been east of Athens.

INTERVIEWER

That reminds me, I meant to ask you what's behind your interest in the more exotic systems such as Zen, or Dr. Reich's orgone theories?

BURROUGHS

Well, these non-conventional theories frequently touch on something going on that Harvard and M.I.T. can't explain. I don't mean that I endorse them wholeheartedly, but I am interested in any attempt along those lines. I've used these orgone accumulators and I'm convinced that something occurs there, I don't know quite what. Of course, Reich himself went around the bend, no question of that.

INTERVIEWER

You mentioned Scientology earlier. Do you have a system for getting on, or are you looking for one?

BURROUGHS

I'm not very interested in such a crudely three-dimensional manipulative schema as L. Ron Hubbard's, although it's got its points. I've studied it and I've seen how it works. It's a series of manipulative gimmicks. They tell you to look around and see what you would have. The results are much more subtle and more successful than Dale Carnegie's. But as far as my living by a system, no. At the same time, I don't think anything happens in this universe except by some

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power—or individual—making it happen. Nothing happens of itself. I believe all events are produced by will.

INTERVIEWER

Then do you believe in the existence of God?

BURROUGHS

God? I wouldn't say. I think there are innumerable gods. What we on earth call God is a little tribal god who has made an awful mess. Certainly forces operating through human consciousness control events. A Luce writer may be an agent of God knows what power, a force with an insatiable appetite for word and image. What does this force propose to do with such a tremendous mound of image garbage? They've got a regular casting office. To interview Mary McCarthy, they'll send a shy Vassar girl who's just trying to get along. They had several carny people for me. "Shucks, Bill, you got a reefer?" *Reefer*, my God! "Certainly not," I told them. "I don't know what you're talking about." Then they go back and write a nasty article for the files.

INTERVIEWER

In some respects, *Nova Express* seems to be a prescription for social ailments. Do you see the need, for instance, of biologic courts in the future?

BURROUGHS

Certainly. Science eventually will be forced to establish courts of biologic mediation, because life forms are going to become more incompatible with the conditions of existence as man penetrates further into space. Mankind will have to undergo biologic alterations ultimately, if we are to survive at all. This will require biologic law to decide what changes to make. We will simply have to use our intelligence to plan mutations, rather than letting them occur at random. Because many such mutations—look at the saber-tooth tiger—are bound to be very poor engineering designs. The future, decidedly, yes. I think there are innumerable possibilities,

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literally innumerable. The hope lies in the development of non-body experience and eventually getting away from the body itself, away from three-dimensional coordinates and concomitant animal reactions of fear and flight, which lead inevitably to tribal feuds and dissension.

INTERVIEWER

Why did you choose an interplanetary war as the conflict in *Nova Express*, rather than discord between nations? You seem fascinated with the idea that a superterrestial power is exercising an apparatus of control, such as the death dwarfs—

BURROUGHS

They're parasitic organisms occupying a human host, rather like a radio transmitter, which direct and control it. The people who work with encephalograms and brain waves point out that technically it will someday be possible to install at birth a radio antenna in the brain which will control thought, feeling, and sensory perceptions, actually not only control thought, but make certain thoughts impossible. The death dwarfs are weapons of the nova mob, which in turn is calling the shots in the Cold War. The nova mob is using that conflict in an attempt to blow up the planet, because when you get right down to it, what are America and Russia really arguing about? The Soviet Union and the United States will eventually consist of interchangeable social parts and neither nation is morally "right." The idea that anyone can run his own factory in America is ridiculous. The government and the unions—which both amount to the same thing: control systems—tell him who he can hire, how much he can pay them, and how he can sell his goods. What difference does it make if the state owns the plant and retains him as manager? Regardless of how it's done, the same kind of people will be in charge. One's ally today is an enemy tomorrow. I have postulated this power—the nova mob—which forces us to play musical chairs.

INTERVIEWER

You see hope for the human race, but at the same time

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you are alarmed as the instruments of control become more sophisticated.

BURROUGHS

Well, whereas they become more sophisticated they also become more vulnerable. *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* applies a more complex, effective control system than the Mayan calendar, but it also is much more vulnerable because it is so vast and mechanized. Not even Henry Luce understands what's going on in the system now. Well, a machine can be redirected. One technical sergeant can fuck up the whole works. Nobody can control the whole operation. It's too complex. The captain comes in and says, "All right, boys, we're moving up." Now, who knows what buttons to push? Who knows how to get the cases of Spam up to where they're going, and how to fill out the forms? The sergeant does. The captain doesn't know. As long as there're sergeants around, the machine can be dismantled, and we may get out of all this alive yet.

INTERVIEWER

Sex seems equated with death frequently in your work.

BURROUGHS

That is an extension of the idea of sex as a biologic weapon. I feel that sex, like practically every other human manifestation, has been degraded for control purposes, or really for anti-human purposes. This whole puritanism. How are we ever going to find out anything about sex scientifically, when *a priori* the subject cannot even be investigated? It can't even be thought about or written about. That was one of the interesting things about Reich. He was one of the few people who ever tried to investigate sex—sexual phenomena, from a scientific point of view. There's this prurience and this fear of sex. We know nothing about sex. What is it? Why is it pleasurable? What is pleasure? Relief from tension? Well, possibly.

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INTERVIEWER

Are you irreconcilably hostile to the twentieth century?

BURROUGHS

Not at all, although I can imagine myself as having been born under many different circumstances. For example, I had a dream recently in which I returned to the family home and I found a different father and a different house from any I'd ever seen before. Yet in a dream sense, the father and the house were quite familiar.

INTERVIEWER

Mary McCarthy has characterized you as a soured utopian. Is that accurate?

BURROUGHS

I do definitely mean what I say to be taken literally, yes, to make people aware of the true criminality of our times, to wise up the marks. All of my work is directed against those who are bent, through stupidity or design, on blowing up the planet or rendering it uninhabitable. Like the advertising people we talked about, I'm concerned with the precise manipulation of word and image to create an action, not to go out and buy a Coca-Cola, but to create an alteration in the reader's consciousness. You know, they ask me if I were on a desert island and knew nobody would ever see what I wrote, would I go on writing. My answer is most emphatically yes. I would go on writing for company. Because I'm creating an imaginary—it's always imaginary—world in which I would like to live.

—CONRAD KNICKERBOCKER

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REPORTS

Some displacements of a sedate and celebrated rose garden but ideal for the processes of a quiet riverview restaurant—

THREE FLAGS Interstate 70 & 5th St. In St. Charles on the banks of the Missouri. An all-glassed-in room overlooks the river. Featuring American, Spanish and French Foods. RA 3-0330.

Best Wishes on Your Retirement

1 2 3

What in Horton Hotel Rue Vernet Gen-San Martine Zapiola The Swan Last Day de Cobo Principe di Castel Hose it Chicale von Koepen Countess Gay Gudewill Count Randy Anne Fuzz Rose Mary Griesedick Vieled Miguel Garcia de Gordon Hell does that mean????? On the scene photographs by William Born Field Retarded Children Project Inc Famous Barr Post St. Louis Magasine 52 just outside the barbecue corr all mes cheries Guggenheim Theresa Riley Nance Roger sponsored from top to bottom excitingly randy young St.Louis citizen's Bicentennial salute

(His Eminence John,all mes cheries Guggenheim,St.Loui Louis Cardinal Designate Glennon Theresa Riley Nance Roger thanks for you gracious (spcnsored from top) ticking message looked 8 minutes bottom excitedly randy Victorian younger with such hair to too two young St.Louis citizens gay happy goats and monkey's [illegible] bicentennial salute randy at home?

Miguel de Gordem waters last Thursday in Hell (does that mean off stage Fete Dieu,Principe di Hell on the scene photographs The Swan La Tour??) William born last day field,your a long retarded children project vieled way from St. Louis. I Inc. Famous Barr Post St. Prophet had not thought

A REPORTER

4

Richard Halliburt what in Hotel rue Elliot this music on the Martine waters (off stage The Swan Last Day) vieled phophet in di castle St.Louis clock ticking Victorian gay happy randy at home

Meet me im the shooting gallery/hick/ Quiet the roses/hick/ Ship scenes necessary/ hick/

Signed

thanks for your gracious message..looked 8 minutes younger with such hair too goats and monkeys

Death Magasine 52 had undone so many outside the barbecue Castle

Page from Burroughs' St. Louis Journal.

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William Burroughs

St. Louis Return

(ticket to St. Louis and return in a firstclass room for two people who is the third that walks beside you?) After a parenthesis of more than 40 years I met my old neighbor, Rives Skinker Mathews, in Tangier. I was born 4664 Berlin Avenue changed it to Pershing during the war. The Mathews family lived next door at 4660—red brick three-story houses separated by a gangway large back yard where I could generally see a rat one time or another from my bedroom window on the top floor. Well we get to talking St. Louis and "what happened to so and so" sets in and Rives Mathews really knows what happened to any so and so in St. Louis. His mother had been to dancing school with "Tommy Eliot"—(His socks wouldn't stay up. His hands were clammy. I will show you fear in dancing school)—Allow me to open a parenthesis you see Rives Mathews had kept a scrap book

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of St. Louis years and his mother left a collection of visiting cards from the capitals of Europe. I was on my way back to St. Louis as I looked through Rives' scrapbook dim flickering pieces of T. S. Eliot rising from the pages—(But what have I my friend to give you put aside on another tray? Those cards were burned in my winter house fire, October 27, 1961—Comte Wladmir Sollohub Rashis Ali Khan Bremond d'ars Marquis de Migre St. John's College 21 Quai Malaquais Principe de la Tour—Gentilhomo di Palazzo—you're a long way from St. Louis and vice versa.)

"I want to reserve a drawing-room for St. Louis."

"A drawing-room? Where have you been?"

"I have been abroad."

"I can give you a bedroom or a roomette as in smaller."

"I will take the bedroom."

6:40 P.M. Loyal Socks Rapids out of New York for St. Louis—Settled in my bedroom surrounded by the luggage of ten years abroad I wondered how small a roomette could be. A space capsule is where you find it. December 23, 1964, enlisting the aid of my porter, a discreet Oriental personage and a far cry indeed from old "Yassah Boss George" of my day, a table was installed in this bedroom where I could set up my Facit portable and type as I looked out the train window. Snapping an occasional picture with my Zeiss Ikon, I could not but lament the old brass spittoons, the smell of worn leather, stale cigar smoke, steam iron and soot. Looking out the train window—click click clack—back back back—Pennsylvania Railroad en route four people in a drawing room::::One leafs through an old joke magazine called *LIFE:*—("What we want to know is who put the sand in the spinach?")—A thin boy in prep school clothes thinks this is funny. Ash gathers on his father's Havana held in a delicate gray cone the way it holds on a really expensive cigar. Father is reading *The Wall Street Journal.* Mother is putting on the old pancake, *The Green Hat* folded on her knee. Brother—"Bu" they call him—is looking out the train window. The time is 3 P.M. The train is one hour out of St. Louis, Missouri. Sad toy train it's a long way to go see on back each time place

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what I mean dim jerky far away. /*Take*/ Look out the window of the train. Look. Postulate an observer Mr. B. from Pitman's Common Sense Arithmetic at Point X one light hour away from the train. Postulate further that Mr. B. is able to observe and photograph the family with a telescopic camera. Since the family image moving at the speed of light will take an hour to reach Mr. B., when he takes the 3 P.M. set the train is pulling into St. Louis Union Station at 4 P.M. St. Louis time George the porter there waiting for his tip. (Are you a member of the Union? Film Union 4 P.M.?) The family will be met at the station by plain Mr. Jones or Mr. J. if you prefer. (It was called Lost Flight. Newspapers from vacant lots in a back alley print shop lifted bodily out of a movie set the Editor Rives Mathews. Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Burroughs and their two sons Mortimer Jr. and William Seward Burroughs of 4664 Berlin Avenue changed it to Pershing during the war. I digress I digress.)

Postulate another observer Mr. B-1 at Point X-1 two light hours away. The train in his picture is now two light hours out of St. Louis at 2 P.M. still in the dinner. The train is stopped by a vacant lot distant 1920 wind and dust /*Take*/ remote foreign suburbs—end of a subdivision street—What a spot to land with a crippled ship—sad train whistles cross a distant sky. See on back what I mean each time place dim jerky far away not present except in you watching a 1920 movie out the train window? Returning to 1964 or what's left of it—December 23, 1964, if my memory serves I was thinking about a friend in New York name of Mack Sheldon Thomas not a finer man in Interzone than old S. T. has this loft apartment and every time he leaves the bathroom door open there is a rat gets in the house so looking out the train window I see a sign: Able Pest Control /*Take*/

"I tell you boss when you think something you see it—all Mayan according to the Hindu philosophizers," observed B. J. who fortunately does not take up any space in the bedroom.

"B. J. there is no call to theorize from a single brass spittoon or even a multiple smell of worn leather. You know I dislike

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theories."

"George! the nudes!"—(He knew of course that the nudes would be waiting for me in front of the Union Station.)

Look out the train window /*Take*/: acres of rusting car bodies—streams crusted with yesterday's sewage—American flag over an empty field—Wilson Stomps Cars—City of Xenia Disposal—South Hill a vast rubbish heap—Where are the people? What in the name of Christ goes on here? Church of Christ/*Take*/ crooked crosses in winter stubble—The porter knocks discretely.

"Half an hour out of St. Louis, sir."

Yes the nudes are still there across from the station recollect once returning after a festive evening in East St. Louis hit a parked car 60 MP thrown out of the car rolled across the pavement and stood up feeling for broken bones right under those monumental bronze nudes by Carl Milles Swedish sculptor depict the meeting of the Missouri and Mississippi river waters. It was a long time ago and my companion of that remote evening is I believe dead. (I digress I digress.)

But what has happened to Market Street the skid row of my adolescent years? Where are the tattoo parlors, novelty stores, hock shops—brass knucks in a dusty window—the seedy pitchmen—("This museum shows all kinds social disease and self abuse. Young boys need it special"—Two boys standing there can't make up their mind whether to go in or not—One said later "I wonder what was in that lousy museum?")—Where are the old junkies hawking and spitting on street corners under the gas lights?—distant 1920 wind and dust—box apartments each with its own balcony—Amsterdam—Copenhagen—Frankfurt—London—anyplace.

Arriving at the Chase Plaza Hotel I was shown to a large double room a first class room in fact for two people. Like a good European I spent some time bouncing on the beds, testing the hot water taps, gawking at the towels the soap the free stationery the television set—(And they call *us* hicks)

"This place is a paradise," I told B. J.

And went down to the lobby for the local papers which I

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check through carefully for items or pictures that intersect amplify or illustrate any of my writings past present or future. Relevant material I cut out and past in a scrap book—(some creaking hints—*por eso* I have survived) Relevant material I cut out and paste in a scrap book—(Hurry up please it's time)—For example, last winter I assembled a page entitled *Afternoon Ticker Tape* which appeared in *My Magazine* published by Jeff Nuttall of London. This page, an experiment in newspaper format, was largely a rearrangement of phrases from the front page of *The New York Times*, September 17, 1899, cast in the form of code messages. Since some readers objected that the meaning was obscure to them I was particularly concerned to find points of intersection, a decoding operation you might say relating the text to external coordinates: (From *Afternoon Ticker Tape:* "Most fruitful achievement of the Amsterdam Conference a drunk policeman") And just here in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* for December 23, I read that a policeman has been suspended for drinking on duty slobbed out drunk in his prowl car with an empty brandy bottle—(few more brandies neat)—(From *A.T.T.*: "Have fun in Omaha")—And this item from Vermillion, S.D.: "Omaha Kid sends jail annual note and $10"—"Please use for nuts food or smokes for any prisoners stuck with Christmas in your lousy jail" signed "The Omaha Kid"—(From *A.T.T.:* "What sort of eels called Retreat 23?")—*St. Louis Globe Democrat*: "A sixth army spokesman stated two more bodies recovered from the Eel River. Deaths now total 23."—(From *A.T.T.:* "Come on Tom it's your turn now")—*St. Louis Post Dispatch*: "Tom Creek overflows its banks."

Unable to contain himself B.J. rolled on the bed in psychophantic convulsions: "I tell you boss you write it and it happens. Why if you didn't write me I wouldn't be here."

I told him tartly that such seeming coincidence was no doubt frequent enough if people would just keep their eyes and ears open. We descended to The Tenderloin Room for dinner where I was introduced to an American speciality: baked potato served with sour cream. Ausgezeichnet.

"I tell you boss you couldn't touch this food in Paris for

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anywhere near the price."

The next day very mild and warm I walked around the old neighborhood which is not far to walk now the old Bixby place used to be right where the hotel is now and I passed it every day as a child on my way to Forest Park with brother "Bu" and our English governess who always told me:—"Don't ask questions and don't pass remarks"—. This cryptic injunction I have been forced to disregard for professional reasons, you understand. So prowling about with my camera looking for 1920 scraps—bits of silver paper in the wind—sunlight on vacant lots—The Ambassador—"Home With A Heart"—where an old friend Clark St. lived—4664 still there looking just the same—("Do you mind if I take a few pictures? used to live here you know.")—so few people on the street—Convent Of The Sacred Heart—This message on a stone wall—"Gay—Lost—" the houses all look empty—It was not given me to find a rat but I did photograph several squirrels (offered us his pictures of a squirrel hunt)—So back to my quiet remote room and my scrap books.

"Ash pits—an alley—a rat in the sunlight—It's all here," I tapped my camera, "all the magic of past times like the song says right under your eyes back in your own back yard. Why are people bored? Because they can't see what is right under their eyes right in their own back yard. And why can't they see what is right under their eyes?—(Between the eye and the object falls the shadow)—And that shadow, B. J., is the *pre-recorded word.*"

"Oh sir you slobbered a bimfull."

"Like I come out here to see 'a bunch of squares in Hicksville'? Well I will see just that. I come here to see what I see and that's another story. Any number of stories. Walk around the block keeping your eyes open and you can write a novel about what you see—down in the lobby last night—smoky rose sunset across the river."

"The river is in the other direction boss."

"So what? Shift a few props. Now would you believe it people are sitting there with their back to that sunset."

"I don't want to believe it boss."

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"B. J., remember the roller coaster at Forest Park Highlands?"

"I sure do boss. Why one time me and that Mexican girl used to work in the Chink laundry on Olive street—"

"All right, B. J. cut. From now on we run a clean show. A show you can take your kids and your grandmother to see it. Just good clean magic for all the family. Remember Thurston?"

"I sure do boss. He made a white elephant disappear."

"Exactly—a white elephant—all our gray junk yesterdays —everything sharp and clear like after the rain."

At this point B. J. jumped to his feet, opened an umbrella and bellowed out "April Showers"—(White rain slashed down —a wall of water you understand.)

"All right, B. J., Cut!"

Sunday December 27 driving around St. Louis with brother "Bu" stopping here and there to take pictures—The Old Courthouse and all the records/*Take*/and there by the river across the river depending on which way you come on it is the arch still under construction at that time 600 feet high when they finished it—(Gateway To The West)—has an ominous look like the only landmark to survive an atomic blast or other natural catastrophe/*Take*/cobblestone streets along the levee—refuge of river boat days—strata of brick and masonry—geology of a city—MacArthur Bridge/*Take*/ and just *there* a truck will crash through the guard rail and fall 75 feet killing the driver you can see the dotted line in the *Post Dispatch* picture/*Take*/River Queen and the Admiral just like they used to be red plush guilt the lot cruising down the river on a Sunday afternoon.

"Shall we take in the West End?"

Clayton and the West End suburbs now built up beyond recognition after 20 years absence. In the 1920's my family moved out west on the Price Road—(700S./*Take*/and just down the road is the John Burroughs School and there is the locker room door/*Take*/where I stood one afternoon a long time ago and watched the torn sky bend with the wind lightning struck the school just *there*/*Take*/—(Whoever said lightning

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never strikes twice in the same place was no photographer.)—1929 tornado if my memory serves when all the records went up name and address old arch there by the river with the cold spring news.

"Cruising Down the River on a Sunday Afternoon"—(This music across the water—The Veiled Prophet Ball off stage)—On the scene photographs by William Born Field St. Louis Magazine 52, Retarded Children's Project, young St. Louis citizens bicentennial salute: (Happy New Year Comte Hector Perrone de San Martine Mrs. Edge at home last Thursday in May, Fête Dieu, Principe de la Tour, Gentilhomo di Palazzo, you're a long retarded children project veiled way from St. Louis. I, Famous Bar Prophet, had not thought Death Magazine 52 had undone so many for I have known them all: Baron Rashid Pierre de Cobo—Helen Zapiola Theresa Riley—I digress I digress.)

"Now what in Horton Vernet Gen-San Martine Zapiola The Swan Last Day de Cobo Principe di Castel Hose it Chicale Randy Vieled Miguel Garcia de Rube Gordon Hell does that mean?" interjected B. J.

(A long review—human voices—*They* expected answers?)

Family Reunion at my Aunt K's. B. J. has observed with his usual astuteness in such matters that there is only half a bottle of whisky on the side board, volunteered for bartender duty surreptitiously serving himself double measure so when another bottle is produced rather sooner than later we both feel a little well you know B. J. is an old Alcohol Anonymous as used to electrify the meetings with his confessions: "Once at the house of a friend" he begins sepulchrally "in the dead of night—I"—he stabs a finger at his chest—"sneaked into the room of my host's adolescent son." He tiptoes across the platform and turns to the audience. "You get the picture?" The audience stirs uneasily. B. J. shifts an imaginary flashlight—"arrow heads—a stone axe—butterfly trays—the cyanide jar—a stuffed owl—Whoo whoo whoo drank the alcohol off that boy's preserved centipede?"—It was emetic in the good sense. (I digress—a drunk policeman—Stein reverts to his magazine.)

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I address myself to a cousin who is now account executive for an advertising firm: "What I say is time for the artist and the ad man to get in a symbiotic way and give birth to what we may call 'Creative Advertising' I mean advertisements that tell a story and create character. Like this see? So you handle the Southern Comfort account?"

"Ty Bradly river boat gambler at your service, suh," His blue eyes fixed quizzically on the barmaid's ample bosom, he drawled out "I'll take double Southern Comfort, Ma'm."

"Pardon me are you Colonel Bradly? Colonel Ty Bradly?"

Bradly turned to face the question his eyes unbluffed unreadable two fingers in a vest pocket rested lightly on the cold blue steel of his Remington derringer.

"I am suh."

"Yeah and think what we could do with the Simmons Mattress account," interjected B. J.

(All right, B. J.,/*Cut!*/) See what I mean? glamour—romance —Inspector J. Lee of the Nova Police smokes Players—(flashes his dirty rotten hunka tin)—Agent K9 uses a Bradly laser gun—Advertisements should provide the same entertainment value as the content of a magazine. *Your* product deserves the best. Why make up silly jingles? Why not use the good old songs like "Annie Laurie". There's a story goes with that song. Remember a young cop whistling "Annie Laurie" down cobblestone streets? Then he stopped in the corner saloon for a glass of Budweiser which he couldn't have done really being on duty. Yes he would have approved your favorite smoke. Show your cards all *Players*. And remember a young cop whistling "Annie Laurie" down cobblestone streets twirling his club drew September 17, 1899 over St. Louis.

(The sky goes out against his back.)

Mr. Dickson Terry of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* interviews your reporter: "As you know in the 1890's St. Louis was famous throughout the world for such restaurants as Tony Faust—But when I was last here 20 years ago there was not a first class eating place to be found in the city—You might say all the uh flavor had been siphoned off into the

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subdivisions and country clubs of the West End—This process is now being reversed—any number of excellent restaurants—three in fact right here in the Chase Plaza Hotel—a movement *back* to the city—*back* to the 1890's finds expression in Gas Light Square and the refurbished river boats—yes decidedly the reversal of a trend which I for one found deplorable—and that is what I am getting at in this seemingly obscure passage." I taped a text on the table between us, a text using the three column format of a small town newspaper.

THE MOVING TIMES
September 17, 1899

Mr Bradly Mr Martin
stood there on dead
stars heavy with his
dusty answer drew
September 17, 1899
over New York that
morning giving you
my toy soldiers put
away in the attic.

Attic of the Eugene Field House you understand never happened. Remember the *Mary Celeste?* ghost ship abandoned back in 1872 all sails set nobody on board fresh southerly winds a long time ago for such a purpose? Now here is the front page of *The Chicago Tribune* Monday January 4, 1965 The American Paper For Americans:

Tempest Hurls 807
On Ship Like Ten-
pins—16 Hurt in
Nightmare.

The American liner
Independence—North
Atlantic storm—

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ripped open a weather
door on a lower deck
smashed a porthole on
an upper deck and
hurled half a ton of
ice water on a couple
asleep—(presumably
waking them)—Captain
Riley of the *Independence*
described the storm as
the worst he had encoun-
tered in more than 40
years at sea. "It was
like riding a roller
coaster."

("By the way, B. J. what ever happened to Forest Park Highlands?"

"It burned down, boss—hot peep shows in the penny arcade.")

Well now it so happens that I repatriated myself on the *Independence* docked December 8, 1964 if my memory serves I had the pleasure of meeting Captain Riley at the Captain's Cocktail Party where no one seemed to know who anybody else was supposed to be and everybody a bit miffed in consequence. I approached the Captain directly: "Captain, may I ask you a question? a *novelist's* question?" (For I was you understand the distinguished novelist of whom nobody had heard.)

"Why uh yes," he replied guardedly.

"Please tell me Captain quite frankly do you have any theories or guesses in short any shall we say *notions* with regard to the *Mary Celeste?*"

He replied after a short pause that he could think of no explanation that accounted for all the facts.

"Captain," I stated firmly "the plain fact is that there are no facts. I myself—and I may tell you in strictest confidence that I was once a private investigator—have sifted this matter

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to the bottom most deep and established every reason to doubt that such a ship as the *Mary Celeste* ever existed. The whole thing was a fabrication out of whole cloth or paper more precisely—The Captain's Log Book you understand"—and I gave him a straight look—"Is this the starboard side?" I asked.

"Why yes it is."

"Ah—just so—you see—"

So with the picture of that old sea dog shifting slightly as the ship rolled ports of the world in his eyes and a picture post card of the *SS Independence* pasted into my own log of the voyage steaming across a paper sea just as empty as the *Mary Celeste*—paper you understand—not a passenger in sight—well just so—"The American paper for Americans—*Independence*—"

So I make these last entries in the log book of my St. Louis return—luggage stacked in the lobby—back through the ruins of Market Street to the Union Station nudes waiting there in the dry fountain of an empty square—I have returned to pick up a few pieces of sunlight and shadow—silver paper in the wind—frayed sounds of a distant city.

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THE SENSE COMES OVER ME, AND THE WANING LIGHT OF MAN, BY THE Ist NATIONAL BANK

My stepfather stood on the corner
by the national bank, quiet
the hot lights
nights moved on
between those week periods
the old men
spat, they seemed possessed of stronger points
a willingness to jut from their foreheads
not articulation but a world of determination and only
that, an insistence, a manifestation of the bottom jaw
then, as now, the most stupidly local preoccupation,
you think
this is abstract,
nigger no, don't
and there weren't. Not there, of course, we were
alone
and it could be said there were questions unformed
for the lapse of any plausible answer, the walnut dropped
literally onto the ground in the woods
and rotted there through the year, and the people cried
out in their ineffectual way for white flour and pork,
canned peaches my aunt brought once was a ceremony
I almost
waited under the table.
The afternoons. So Do you
think to think of love? Or weld
that affair
with the heat of ancient transplanted tassels,
the relief of mystically rough elements

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The dead watch
of the sun,
the unyielding severity of a farmer feeding pigs
the routine collection of mud
mixed with the sharp green smell of excrement on their boots
old times gone over
save us
from the anterooms of the moral what
the shiftless which everyone wore, blue jackets
overalls, an unspoken sign in the starch, laundry
was very much, as now, a form of calculation, land
and starch,
this is no judgement, this is
the weight of dissimilar things bound together
by a strictly regulated common deprivation
the low and the high, no middle, held in a smiling equilibrium
you may eat only the shit I give you. One could not
comprehend. Under a mulberry tree the road was purple
with their running from their farms into town. Passing
at night on the black road in the car I marked the passing
over those spots under those boughs. It meant nothing, it
could mean nothing, one would not have mentioned it. Abandoned
the trees were like my youth. It was a stain of assurance
I preferred to the cant on the bank steps but an utterly sad
and contemptible inability to insist on the stain of reality
and a woe of that lowly order became my sign and weight in that land.

I became that land and wandered out of it.
Sharp
and keen with the fever
this thrill of Spring in the Lord's prayer
which I carried and still love as a vague solace
I carry, confused
that ceaseless speculation over
the ways of love
into the darker borders
of my wounded middle years,
a practical self-pity

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There was a girl
who was a resolution
with whom I walked the empty streets
and climbed the watertower for one night
to show myself, she standing a white spot of summer
on the ground, and looked out I did
over the lights of a realm I thought grander than
and any of it, altogether, was very little, and when
the pictographic scratches in the silver paint told me
as I walked around
the cat-walk expression of what had happened in the 1930's
men vomiting from hunger
on the thin sidewalk below, a lonely mason
with his business ring on, but beyond,
in the little shoe repair shops the men,
part of a hopeless vigilante, exhaling the slow mustard gas
of World War I. My mother, moving slowly in a grim kitchen
and my stepfather moving slowly down the green rows of corn
these are my unruined and damned hieroglyphs.
Because they form
the message of men stooping down
in my native land, and father an entire conglomerate
of need and wasted vision. All the children
were taught the pledge of Allegiance, and the land was pledged
to private use, the walnut dropped in the autumn on the ground
green, and lay black in the dead grass in the spring.

there they do lie, the principle
residue of my past, and the past
of my gutless generation, nineteen year olds
invaded the white house today, a screen
was put up to shield the nervous exit
of Ladybird, they sang and refused to move,
she split and I felt it possible again
at the end of a very long winter
to be a less schizophrenic American, a little
of the pus was spooned out of my brain, I gave
an arbitrary grade to a backward black girl

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66

I remembered to spit on the sidewalk
when I thot of the first 35 hundred marines
who landed in Vietnam yesterday, I spoke of
President Johnson as the logical extension of
Increase Mather, my heart, like theirs,
a "civit box of sin" and late in the afternoon
explained *Metamorphosis*, and Kafka as a product
of a hung-up family, and a hung-up people,
bringing forward, inching nearer
the perpetuality of the lives we lead on the edge
of the great American desert where you certainly
do not
want to be buried but buried you are, the horizons
recede before you, they are busy with the presentations,
that remote we are, of the tilting planes of escape
...which are: the speculation of what we might do,
an *imagination* of the geometry
of our location
the problem of the potato
stamped to identify its place of origin,
that, for one of the poorest of foods
No one,
has loved the west I came into, this is not
a Shulamite maiden, nor does anyone care to whisper
this far into our ear, the allegory does not exist, the marriage
will not come who would marry Simplot or Anaconda
I warn you world of good intention the birth of Mohammed
will be fought in this neck of the cut-off world
devoid of the culture that spawned it consciously
and moved on, any new blood will be
turned to an unnumberable plasma
we could still walk into the banks
and demand the money, but the usual madness
—we have been preceded by Cosa Nostra, there is
nothing so lame and halt as lateness

—EDWARD DORN

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Doctor Marfa

Clancy Sigal

A foolish trip up to a dark, Midlands town, the pelting cold rain soaking into the black brick of the factories like old bad oil, glistening nothing. A wasted trip, through the good offices of the local M.P. Town fathers showed me everything and showed me nothing. I might just as well stayed down in London, reading books. An old factory town, with a history of working wives, no need (they say) of day nurseries and plenty of "ramified family units". Steep black chimneys and generations living together in the same blank-front houses, rectitude and still some Non-Conformism left, open doors and closed minds to all strangers. A foolish, wasted trip.

My train was to leave in two hours and I asked to be taken to the mental hospital on the hill before I went. Town fathers reluctant, vaguely worried. But in the afternoon an interview was set up with the deputy chief of the hospital. In his office, in the grey, ancient-looking building which was once the poor house, sit the Chief Nurse and the Assistant Town Mayor.

The Deputy Chief was small, compact, Cypriot, in a white coat. He popped out of his chair and shook my hand. "American, are you? Ah yes. What is it like in America. I have an offer to be resident at the—hold a minute, I will find the name—the State Psychiatric Clinic at North Platte, Nebraska."

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The Assistant Mayor looked feebly embarrassed. The Cypriot psychiatrist, whose name was Dr Marfa, rushed on. "You know," he asked, "where North Platte, Nebraska, is? I mean how it is? They offer me $750 a month. Is that enough to live on?" I told him I imagined it was, not munificent but enough. Then I asked him about the treatments favored at this hospital. Quickly he replied, "Mostly we use mild ECT (electro-shock) and ether ab-reaction. Maybe a little psychoanalysis. Another doctor does that. $750 a month. Would that be enough for me to buy a car? A new Ford perhaps? Ah, I like those Fords of yours. So much more beautiful than the English Fords, don't you think?"

I carefully explained what $750 a month in America usually means. The Assistant Mayor found he had work to do at the Town Hall and left us. The Chief Nurse stubbornly stayed on. The Cypriot waved a deprecatory hand at me. "Don't worry. I can't accept in less than six months. I have a contract here. No question of ethics."

I said that one of the nice things I had found about England was that the medical profession seemed more orientated toward service, and less toward money, than its counterpart in America.

"All wrong," Dr Marfa almost shouted. "That is all wrong. A man should be paid for his labor. Don't you agree, Sister?" The Chief Nurse said nothing. "Bloody nonsense," snorted Dr Marfa as though in reply to something I, or she, had said. "That's why I left Cyprus. I couldn't make money. Dedication means less than nothing if a man starves." I temporized.

First, said Dr Marfa, a man must live. "That is what is wrong with England. They do not let the doctors live. We are so underpaid we go off in all directions." As a cautionary tale, I explained in some detail about psychiatry in America. Dr Marfa listened with great respect and then burst out, "A race of geniuses, you Americans! Me, I want money. Lots of money. What is wrong with that? In England it is treated like a sin. The English are children. Look here. I love being a doctor. Treating mentally ill people, I love that. But I want to be paid more than laborer's wages. This makes me evil?

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Answer me!"

I changed the subject and asked him about his hospital. He grew impatient. "Oh, old people mainly. You know the kind of thing. Not much to be done. Kindness, a place to stay, a roof over their heads, shocks every now and then. The climate in this place, Nebraska. What is it like?" I said I was mainly interested in his younger patients, what made them go under.

"Younger," said Dr Marfa, "they are depressive. A few schizophrenics. Not many. Depressive. We use ECT. This place, the—I'll read it—State Psychiatric Clinic, North Platte —does it have, you know, a good reputation?" The Chief Nurse squirmed uncomfortably. I told Marfa I knew nothing of the clinic.

"Nothing? Nothing at all? But Sister says you were asking technical questions about the treatments here!" I smiled and explained that many Americans regard themselves as lay analysts. Dr Marfa lighted a cigar. He was serious when he said, "They must be horrible as patients." Chief Nurse excused herself and shut the door firmly on us.

Dr Marfa explained that he had not been in this particular town long. Most of his patients, he said, were working-class, and a great many women. "How", he said, "do you pronounce this place in Nebraska? Plat or Plate?" The first, I said. And did most patients fall into any one clinical category? Marfa thought about it, rolling the cigar about in his mouth, and replied that most of them, particularly the women, were depressives, or anxiety depressives. "How large an apartment could I afford on $750 a month? Would it be possible to buy a house? I am getting old," here he smiled, "and I want to become married."

I asked him what, in his opinion, tended to cause the anxiety in his younger patients. Did any of it have to do with the threatening recession in town, with the change-over from old heavy industry to light engineering? He asked, "What recession?"

"Merely," said Dr Marfa, "they cannot adjust to life. That is why they are anxious. The women, they are married with

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children. Then mother or father, old, come to live with them. Hence, anxiety neurosis. But you must remember, I am new here." He paused, swiveled about and stared out the window at the house-encumbered hills, yellow and gray, which gave into the town. For perhaps three or four minutes he said nothing. Then he got up and stood close to the window, staring into the town at the bottom of the steep rocky path leading up to the old poorhouse which was now the asylum. When he spoke again he said, "This heat you speak of in the summer in North Platte, Nebraska. Is it wet or dry?"

Stowell Street Corporation Yard

Places take you by surprise
you walk past them
and they are at 12°
where workers are in 19th cent. conditions
surroundings
stances
looks poses
foremen are in grubby
brown offices
where business
must have started
and foremen wear
probably
the same clothes
(not overalls)
proud to be
humbled
by their superiors
"their men" work amongst
the rubbish in lines
shoving back
bit by bit

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boxes and dust
and all the other
shit we put
in our
bins
and next to the corporation
yard
a big new building
while
the men
work with their
hands & backs
as many generations
of peasants in fields
worked before
them.

why not machines?

Two City Poems

1
skirt torn
high
from fighting

screams

leans
on the buyer

2
gutter cat
asleep?

blood

—THOMAS PICKARD

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Drawing by Bernard Cohen for The Paris Review 1965

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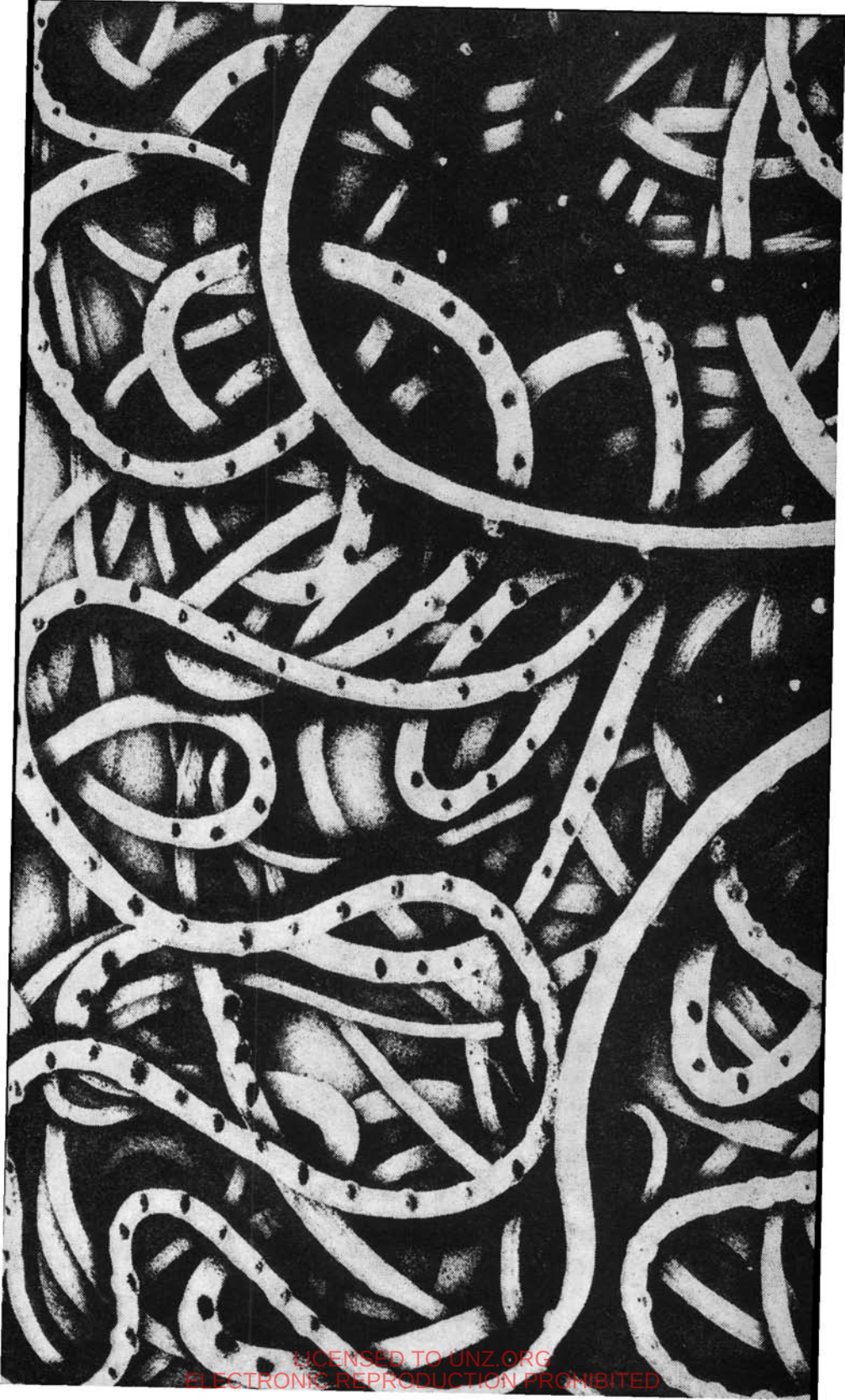

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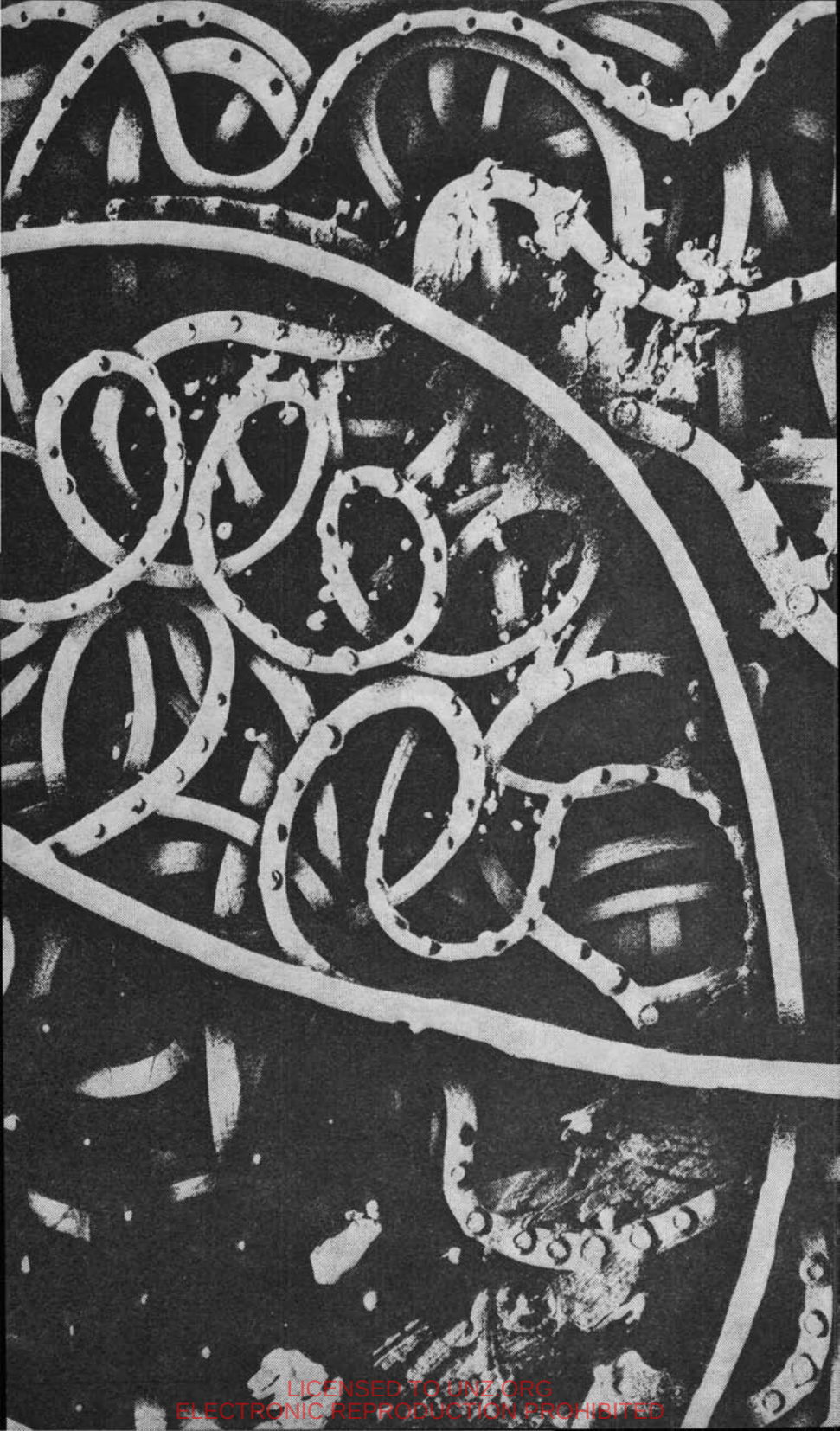

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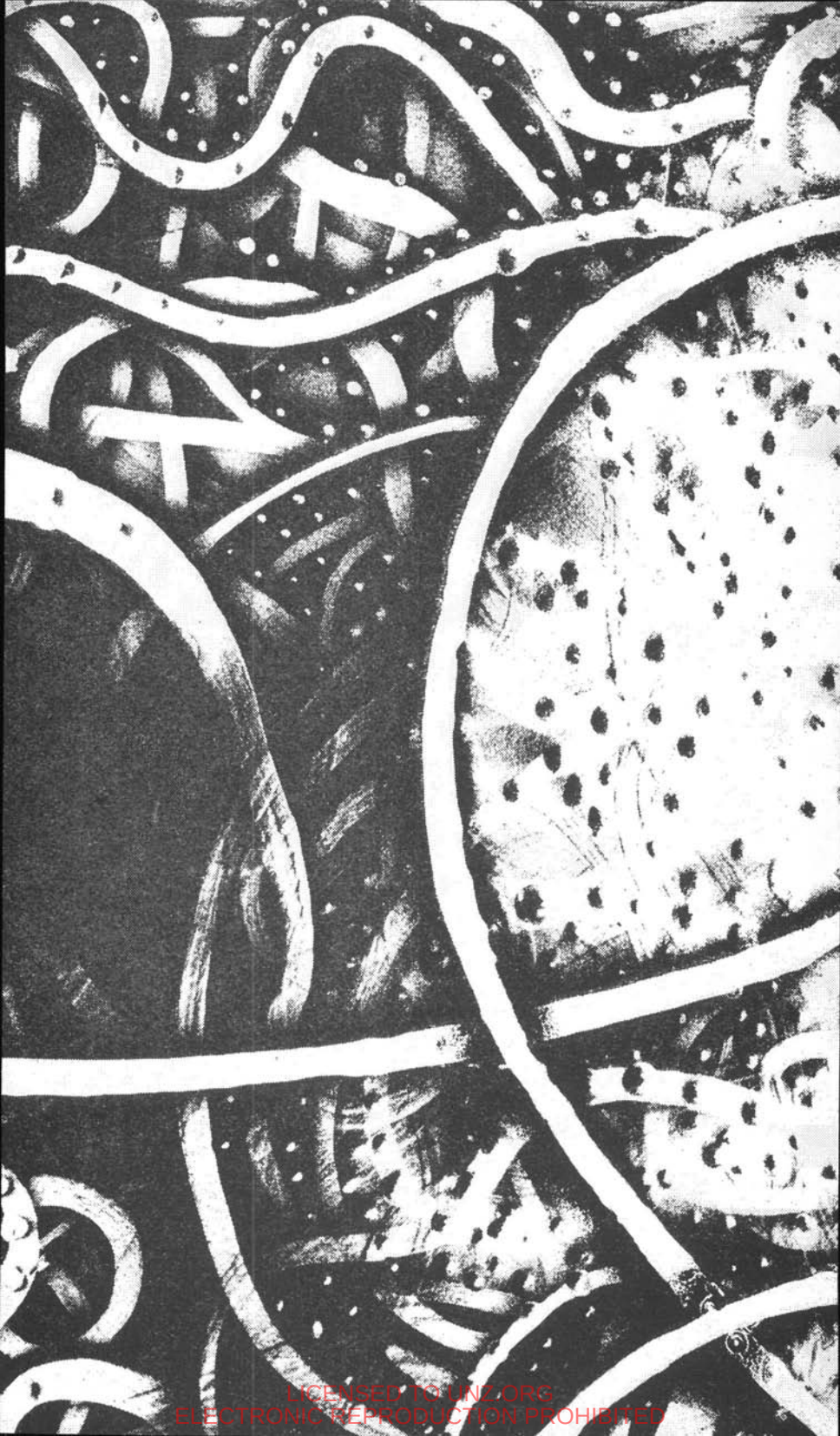

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Robin Blaser: THE FAERIE QUEENE

1
AN APPEARANCE

Okay A nightingale
does sing
outside this window

A mirror of leaves and noise

This monument
has torn to pieces our guide book
of facts

This startles

A nightingale,
the bird so ancient
he (anybody)
falls back
on his dusty shoes, pointing

The event darkens So like
our trembling,
we caught at it
breaking the skin

2
METAMORPHOSES

I burn 'your' magnificence in the streets
It is paper

The gods written on paper flare up
suddenly
in a turn taken up the alley

I turn away from the stars,

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roll over,
it is that falls out of my eye
a pearl of great price
no tear
The same with the flakes of mica,
desiring
the tree stands before me of what name

3
SO

You speak against the mundane
which is for instance
the sidewalk

and, I suspect, the gods
severed and loose
like architectural adornments

The word means
worldly
but requiring the mundus

Gloria Swanson used one image to reappear
in the imagination
the claw,
and Garbo chose white to show that death
works at the convenience of the lady of the
camellias, thus saving Robert Taylor for
later movies—in white flannels, the college
hero out on the town
I suppose you think the
plots were about Norma Desmond and Mme. Gautier

You missed the structure they personified

where Dionysus lay sleeping against
the corner stone

the wall broke into pieces of glass

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Again and again

I saw myself about to wake him

4
FROM A FORTUNE COOKY

He is practicing a speech before the glass

There is a slight wind
bitter on the tongue
An image trembles
or floats as in water

The dismemberment happens
like rain against the sidewalk

What rules
is a twist of light

In the arms of these railroads,
no music
discovers us

5
THE SPHINX

A honk and broken sounds

Rain spills lights
against the window
They have a brief life
of their own

faced into

A rayed machine is before me
devouring my labor This much,
a dream wherein I read the next morning
that many carry the wands
I am to ask a question

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where no question exists

Who stops among the leaves
of this tree I'm married to
in Roman fashion?

I piss
into the roots of my love
where words break true

6
FOR GUSTAVE MOREAU

The streets are my body
or rather the wish
of the skin to put on
the grass in a gold rain

not vice-versa,

the lips twisting to allow
the tongue to play in
the broken mirror on the floor

Catches an arm
a distance
the light
at the ceiling
This kills
the lift begged
of a magical hand

I have walked a long way
traced in these pieces
an arm
a crotch The queen
of faerie guarded
by blue winged griffins
Untouched by

—ROBIN BLASER

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Bodies

At home now the first grey
in the hollows, morning in
the grass, in the brick
I hold you sleeping

and see last night
a bang the back door opens
holding your arm you
white say don't
be frightened smiling
your loving mouth
but white you are white

on a window a
window was it
into the flesh of your arm:
hung in the lab
in the hum of a
ship's hold, no-one
to hear or help you

O you are stitched and
safe now, my fingers
feel you, I can
taste the oil in your
skin, your salty hair

knowing your blue
strings where the blood is
wanting you safe in
hard and shining steel
or tough as mineral, so
even a thin spirit of you
could be unkillable

—ELAINE FEINSTEIN

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Operation Buena Vista

Irvin Faust

The proud red glow was gone and for a terrible moment Henry thought the gateway to the west had been wiped out in the night. Then he reached for his field glasses, sighted along his secret tunnel off 95th Street, out over the river, over the folded layers of laminated shale (known to the dumber guys as the Palisades) and closed his eyes. In his head he filled in the space above the water. When he was good and ready, he drove his eyelids apart and stared with all the stored-up power of history, geography and manifest destiny. WHEW. The old combo had worked again; against the new day the dim, spidery grayness hung limp but unmistakable: ALCOA. WHEW. You never knew what you would wake up and not find these days. Satisfied, he slid his glasses into the case, threaded his way over Ezzard (still smiling over his latest hookshot) and slipped into the bathroom. As he brushed and flossed his teeth, he could see out the window, near the gateway, another corner of the western plain, where brave young Hamilton, bright as ALCOA at midnight, had been lured to that fatal shootout. Poor sonuvabitch. If only a guy like Henry had been around to clue Ham, Aaron the Burro would have got his shit kicked out all the way from Weehawken to Princeton Township. A mouthful of toothpaste-water finished old Aaron and spun him down the drain like a nothing cockroach. Henry walked back to his room and whipped into his A.M. Assembly clothes: white shirt, red tie and navy blue jacket. As he wound up the double windsor knot, he previewed the day, bigger than any damn Assembly with its General Electric crap or dumbass trampolines. Finishing with a quick cuff of each shoe against his trousers,

Illustrated by Nathan Cabot Hale

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he walked into the kitchen and sat down before the piled-up books. The all-important permission slip lay in his history, next to the page about the stupidass Hessians. He drew it out and curled it up just a little, figuring on a quick shove and pullaway between toast and coffee and a playitdumb request. Not that he anticipated trouble, but with the old Spraygun, you never knew. Today *could* be his day; then again, ol Spray might wanna preach. Maybe the slope of the curve, which hadn't been preached since he got 82 in first quarter arithmetic. ("Why you a 98, son. Goddam that curve got to slope *up*.") He unfolded the slip and focused on the Princeton part, which was the *real* slope, up the hill from the Delaware, out past the ALCOA gate and laminated shale, far beyond any goddam 98 in arithmetic.

"Whatchou got there?"

Uhoh, ol Spray had beat him to the draw, he slapped leather fast that ol Gun.

"Just a little permission slip," he said absently, smiling at his mother, whose back was turned.

"What kinda permission slip?"

He caught Ezz sliding into a chair, ears and eyes working overtime.

"Oh nothin much."

"Henry, your father is asking you a question. Now you just answer his question."

ALCOA was receding into the gathering sunlight and Weehawken wasn't helping much. "Well," he said, "it's just a little field trip we goin on."

Ezz gave him the suckin eggs and he knew all at once the Gunner had been short. Sure enough...

"I'm out 75¢ and he tells me just another field trip," his father said, abusing his toast. The room echoed to chewing and gulping.

Finally, "It's only to Princeton," Henry said. He dug into his shredded wheat and swallowed. "We gonna see where Washington crossed the Delaware, and Nassau Hall, which useta be the capital and we gonna see a baseball practice."

"Who's gonna pay?"

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"Well I thought..."

"Samuel," his mother said, "I can give him the money. It sounds like a nice trip."

"Yeah, it sounds very nice." The coffee flew down his father's throat. Ezz giggled. Damn Ezz, he get his ass kicked later on. "Henry," his father said, wiping his mouth. "I'm gonna say somethin to you you ain't gonna like. You might not even understand it. But I'm gonna say it. I don't want you goin on no more trips."

"Well I got the money, dad. I got enough. So if you just sign..."

"No, Henry. It ain't the money." His father tipped his chair back. Damn, the slope of the curve. "Like I said, maybe you won't get this. I don't want you goin to no Princeton."

"Why not?"

"I tell you why." The voice was nice and quiet, like it was about to say, step back please? Instead it said funny things. Awful funny. Like it said, "Well, that's no place for you; it's a fool place."

"How come?" His mother's eyes were asking too.

"Henry," the quiet voice said, "you foolin around too much with this stuff. Now you goin to junior high in a few months and you gotta start wakin up. Jus tell me this, what's wrong with New York City?"

"Nothin wrong with New York City. Why can't I go to Princeton?"

"Because, Henry, you ain't got *nothin there*."

"What? What kinda nothin?"

"Henry, I know them places over the river. I worked four years in Tom's Ford. Hell, Tom's Cabin."

"Now Samuel," his mother said, "it's only a trip."

"It's *not* only a trip. Now it's time this boy woke up with all his history and geography and dreamin. Right now, dammit. All his goddam history and geography is right here. Henry, boy, this town is *yours*. Why there's more colored people in New York than any city in the world."

"There's colored people in Princeton. They go back to the revolution."

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"Hell, they're poormouth, Henry; they're pussyfooters."

Somethin funny was goin on, very funny and Ezz was a part of it, those eyes and ears buggin and flappin. Whatinhell was such a big deal about a field trip...?

"Henry," his father said, leaning in, his face looking gray and very tired. "Listen, you got to learn what's what..."

Henry walked slowly down Columbus Avenue, keeping a careful block behind Barbara Jones and Joseph O'Loughlin. At 83rd Street Isolina, Katherine and Leandre swung out. Isolina looked back and waved and hesitated. Without even trying, Henry turned to the Food Fair window and suddenly became fascinated with Del Monte. He studied diced pineapple for five minutes and when he sneaked a look back, they were turning in for the school, Isolina kicking her skirt up and looking straight ahead. Sighing, he stepped away from Del Monte and started downtown, feeling in his inside pocket the empty last line of the permission slip that assigned him to charades, gym and study, while Isey flounced all over the turning point of the revolution. For a moment he thought of scribbling Samuel Strothers, Joseph's old report card bit, and charging the entire day to the Gunner's conscience. Serve him goddam right, treating his own kid like a shitass Benedic Arnold. Shoot man, he scolded, that ain't no way, walking around territory with a goddam forgery in your pocket like a lousy British agent. He took out the slip and tore it up and jammed the pieces into a wire can that asked for a clean city. If only he could stuff the Gunner's words into that can, have them carted out to the goddam incinerator and burned to nothin. He sighed. Shit, why he have to say those crazy things anyway? Crazy goddam things. And mama, like a goddam echo sayin listen to your father now, he been through it all. Ezz givin him the old cream eyes. Shit. A mailbox offered leaning space and he draped over it and twisted back for a view of the project. Fourteenth floor, corner. Still up there beatin their gums. He straightened up, shook his head and started down again. Crazy old Gunner. You could turn off the regular crap like the chemistry and

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lectricity, and the goddam slope of the curve. Yeah you could flick off that jazz with one ear; but that other crap, *that* kept coming, like the fuckin British up Bunker Hill... "Listen, Hank, go down the subway any day and night, what you see? Hah? Black faces. That's what. And what I see every day in the bus? More them faces. Hank they *used* to be white. No more. Understand, Hank?" ...Big fuckin deal. And he kept comin, just kept chargin... "Henry, sometime I wait awhile before I give out the change. Just a little. I give them white hands a fumble and a little hesitation and they *take* it..." I hang your ass up with the company, he thought, if you fumble me... "An Henry, I know places like that Princeton. You *ever* see a colored boy on their football team? You think you see one at baseball practice today?" Well, no colored boy make the team, that's all... "Well Henry, jus look at CCNY, boy that whole *school* is dark. An Henry they got the best chemistry and lectricity courses in the whole country..." Yeah, thas the ol Gunner, the ol crap, the easy stuff, jus reach up and turn it off; and with it finally, with a deep breath, the new jazz hangin on to the lousy slope. The Spraygun was silent at last, only the face kept flappin. Shoot. He erased the face like it was a blackboard, with hard, wide strokes. Shoot.

He turned into 68th Street and saw the lineup of buses. The classes coming down, ragged double file, with Mr. Wunderson and Miss Debono. Assembly clothing and lunch bags, then Joseph and Isolina. Isolina hanging back and jerking her arms at him, that hot temper commanding him to run. Poor hot Isey. Today she'd have to get her geography from Joseph and dumb Joseph thinks Europe in South America. It all began to pile up and spill over, up into his goddam eyeballs—Isey and Joseph and the Gun ridin up his friggin slope, fumblin with his changemaker, the yellow buses gettin all goddam misty. Disgusted, he about-faced and walked away from the school.

The great circle route started at 72nd and Riverside. That was the kickoff point, right at the major confluence of the

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Ohio and the Monongahela. That's where he took his first bearing, gazing through the binocs straight across river to where Hamilton got the business. Right next to Colonel Stevens Castle, top of the great hill that guarded the South Passage inland. Yeah man, them buses would swoop out the tunnel with those dopes munchin their Yankee Doodles and nobody even *dream* whathehell was doin up above in Weehawken Heights or on the Hoboken Plain. How could they? Joseph was no Merriwether Lewis and Isey no goddam Sacajawea. Sheeit.

He moved up the Drive, glasses at the ready, senses honed for action any place in the territory. White marble Soldiers and Sailors at 88th with those fat ol guns, hunched over and miserable. Casing his glasses, he mounted gently and sat astride one of the sad little guys and patted the round belly. Hell, he told all the busloads and his father and Ezz, you be miserable too if you plucked out of Fort Necessity and plopped down here with all the rubberass babies slobberin over you, and all sealed up inside so you're a goddam joke. He stroked the tough old pitted hide and slid off and walked across the street, feeling real bad for lost smoke and flame and glory. Plenty of head shakes.

Six blocks and up to conniving Franny Sigel, staring over the water. He shinnied up the prancing horse and sat alongside Franny and gazed out with him. Everbody who knows somethin lookin out, he thought, everbody, out over the plains and basins and open pits. His sightline cut the SPRY sign. Smiling, he looked pityingly down at the four kids playin Elliott Ness. Poor bastids, thinkin SPRY for fryin like the dumb sign say. Leaning into Franny's ear, he whispered the SPRYwords they shared for today: *S*ilver City, *P*awnee, *R*osebud, *Y*ellow Medicine. He rubbed Sigel's ageless, allseeing eyes that gathered in the magnificence of SPRYcountry. Ok Franny baby, you ol pisscutter, Henry Strother check it all out for you someday. Right where you lookin.

He leaped down, told one of the dumb kids watch how you playin, this govment propety man, and walked back to the west (the important) side of the Drive and continued

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uptown. Up past Fort Lee that guarded the North Passage, and Palisades Park that looped so playfully over the shale. Up to 178th Street where at three o'clock he stopped for a Pep and a Twinsicle.

Having made reconnaisance and taken refreshment, Captain H. A. Strothers, Third Platoon, Fourth Regiment, Rogers' Rifles, climbed down the embankment and out onto the thin spit of land next to the lighthouse and stared up and out at the challenge and invitation of the Northwest Passage. The great, spidery link arched protectively over his head; the sun was warm; he was pleased with the whole operation and he was ready.

He sat on a flat rock and pulled out the latest communiqué. Spreading it carefully out, he hunched over and for the fiftieth time absorbed the message.

May 3
54 Lake Street
Duluth, Minn.

Dear Henry,

I got your last letter ok. It was fine, a real good letter. Well I'm sitting down and replying just before supper and I'll tell you the stuff just like you asked me to. Well from up here next to the Skyline Drive I'm looking down on Superior and I can see three big wheat barges. One is pumping wheat. The lights are coming on and the people on the breakwater pier are walking around and one guy is fishing. Hey right now the rising bridge is rising! Henry, did you know its the highest rising bridge in the world? Well it is. I can still see Wisconsin though not to good. Well thats the scene from here. Now as to what I've been doing, yesterday Dad took me up to Mesabi and let me go down the pits with him. Boy was I scared. But after awhile you get used to it and its a lot of fun. Henry, did you know its the largest open pit in the world? Well it is. As to next week, we're going up to Indian Point next to Canada to look over the old trading post. Next month our class is taking a trip to the

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Black Hills and I'll send you some dirt from the Big Horn. Thanks for your dirt from Washington Heights. Well Henry, thats about all from here. I have to get ready for supper. Write soon and don't forget about this summer.

Your friend,
Lance Olsen

P.S. Maybe this year Killebrew will beat Mantle hah hah.

He stroked it and read it and re-read it. Then he looked up and followed the arch of the bridge to where it hooked onto the mainland. Downstream from the hookup, the great sign, thick and silvery in the daylight, stood up and pointed the way to the biggest open range, the highest rising bridge, the deepest lake in the world.

After supper his father came into his room and gave him a present, "Math Puzzles for Young Scientists," and while Ezz leaned sideways over his spelling and slanted his eyes, the inevitable reverse talking began.

"Henry, I didn't mean to jump down your throat this morning."

"That's all right."

"No it ain't. I want to explain things better. I don't want to wup you into understandin."

"It's ok. Forget it."

"It ain't ok. I wanna explain."

"Ezz gonna listen?"

"Yes he is. This important for both of you."

Eveready Ezz closed his looseleaf and swung around like he was on a pivot. With a deep sigh, Henry bent the gooseneck over his relief map. "Well daddy," he said, "it was jus a permission slip."

"That ain't the *point*. It's the whole way you goin, Henry."

"Which way I'm goin?"

"All this stuff, the maps, the way you thinkin. Henry it jus ain't good for you. Believe me."

"Why?"

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"Why, why. Ever since you a baby. Allus why. Ezz don't ask why. Ezz *trust* in me."

"Ezz a jerk."

The soft, high moan started (naturally), only to be snuffed out by his father's upraised arm. "Ok ok Ezzard, I'm talkin. Henry *teasin* you. Can't you see that?" Mr. Strothers rubbed his face. "Henry," he said, "you so smart. Why can't you use your brains an pull *with* me. It's for *your* good. Henry, I don't wanna see you hurt."

"How I'm gonna be hurt?"

"Ok son, ok, I tell you how. Henry, you know who you named after? You named after Henry *Arm*strong. Hammerin Henry Armstrong."

"Who he?"

"See, you don't know everything. He jus the greatest fighter ever lived, pound for pound, that's all. Oh man, he was fast and tough. He murdered Barney Ross."

"I thought Joe Louis the best."

"Shoot. Only cause he was a heavyweight. Armstrong was a welter and he beat evrybody. Even middleweights. Till the end."

"What happen then?"

"Hell, they used him up. Like an old rag. Made a punchin bag outta him, till he was nothin. Just like they did Ezzard Charles."

"That who Ezzard is?"

"That's right. *He* was a heavyweight, but move like a cat. Smooth as silk. He *beat* Louis. An Henry, he didn't even *like* fightin. Then they squeezed him down to nothin. Like Armstrong. Well you an Ezz, you gonna *become* somethin, not old dried up rags. You gonna carry on. All the way. You gonna make it for them cause you got the chance they never had. You fellas got it all; you gonna hammer; you gonna be smooth; you gonna use your opportunities an you won't get beat the way they got beat. See?"

"I'm usin my opportunities, daddy."

"No you ain't. That's what I'm tellin you. Why I sweat overtime an your mother do cleanin? Jus for you fellas. So

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we move down from Harlem and do right for you. An what do *you* wanna do? All you wanna do is cowboys and Indians. Shoot."

Goddam Ezz, he think he boppin Joe Louis all over again, sittin up straight, kissin ass all over the room. Man, awful hard talkin to the Gun when his voice crack and he shoot spit; but a guy got to protect his country.

"There's *some* cowboys an Indians, daddy, but mostly they're in history." Maybe a few facts. Trouble with the Gun was he never have any facts. "Daddy, you know the Mississippi Missouri the longest river in the world. It's called the father of waters."

The voice cracked higher. "It's mud, Henry. Mud. I seen it. Not in some damn book either. It was a *slave* river. Still is. Henry, I tell you somethin, you big enough. When I was in the army, stationed near Vicksburg—one of your goddam history towns—I couldn't even get a sandwich in a diner. And right in there, proud as punch, a damn German prisner war was feedin his face together with a dozen MPs. That's your father of waters."

Ezz was rocking with joy; his father just kept on hammering.

"Henry, here is where you got it. Here. This the greatest city in the whole world."

"Yeah, it so great how come the Giants and Dodgers take off?"

"I tell you smartboy, I tell you. Because there were too many black faces in the stands. That's why. For a smartboy you right dumb, Henry. Tell me somethin else. That pen pal of yours, that Lance Olsen. He know you a colored boy?"

"Well no. I don't know. It don't make no difference."

"Like hell. Hank, he in another *world*. He don't care about you. The Dodgers an Giants they say bye bye. They don't care. But *I* care. I'm lookin out for you. An I'm tellin you right here you got evrything. Here. *You* can be boss."

"Shoot, we ain't even on the mainland."

"Oh Henry, Henry, this *is* the mainland. Wake up, Henry. You get with this town and you top, man. Ten years ago I

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couldn't drive a bus. Now I'm on Fifth *Avenue*. Ezz understands. He knows what's what. Ezz, quick, give him the west side IRT, fastes route."

Sitting at attention, rolling his head once, then pushing it back, Ezz chanted, "Terminal, South Ferry, Rector, Cortlandt, Chambers, change, Fourteenth, Twenty-third, Thirty-fourth, Timesquare, Seventy-second, Ninety-six, change, One oh Three, One Ten, One Sixteen, One Twenty-five, One Thirty-eight, One Forty-five, One Fifty-five, One Sixty-eight, One Eighty-one, Two Ten, Dyckman, Two Fifteen, Two Twenty-five, Two Forty-two, Terminal." He took a breath, opened his eyes wide, and leaned back.

"See," beamed the Gunner, "Ezzard, what bus take you to Fort Tryon?"

"Fifth Avenue Number Four."

"Which one the UN?"

Broadway Number One oh Four."

"See that Henry? See? You can do that. Bettern that. What he doin with transportation you can do with chemistry and lectricity."

"Shoot."

The Gunner smiled for the first time, stood and stretched, and took off his glasses.

"Well, that's enough for tonight," he said. "You a good boy, Hank, you be all right. Only les pull together like a real family. Ok Hank?"

"Sure."

With the same little smile, Mr. Strothers rubbed his head and walked out, shutting the door softly behind him. Henry stared at his Atlas and fingered the dot at the tip of Lake Superior. Then he fingered the dots of the Giants and Dodgers. Shoot, L.A. and Frisco were loaded with *all* kinds of people, just like New York. Dumb Gunner. Then his mother's voice was flowing through the door.

"Well you didn't have to be *that* hard."

And his father's, rising above hers, "Hell it's for *his* good, Ella..."

Next to him, rocking back and forth like he was saying

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his prayers, Ezz mumbling "F train, Terminal, Chambers, Hudson Canal, Spring, West Fourth, Fourteenth..."

Sunday morning his father took him (just him) on six runs, up and back, Fort Tryon down to Washington Square. He sat right behind the driver's seat and listened while Mr. Strothers leaned back and in a loud, confidential voice announced and re-announced the important sights: Rockefeller Center (electricity), Fibreglas (chemistry), the Pan American mountain, over on Park, squatting on top of Grand Central (chemistry *and* electricity). Pretty good, but nothin natural, not compared to Pike's Peak, the Great Divide or Mesabi. Still, he came on with lots of uh huhs and ain't that somethin, for always there would be a balancin time, like that quid pro quo in the French an Indian treaty. Yes sir, that a fact?...

That night, when released, his father patting his head and smiling, he dived into "The Great North Country" and for the thirtieth time took the run that *really* counted, from Duluth to Sault Ste. Marie. The next day at school, while the class groaned over the composition on Princeton, he whipped through the history of Minnesota.

After supper that night, while Ezz and he were washing dishes, the bell rang. Standing there in the doorway, blinking and bobbing his head was ol Mr. Wunderson. He wore his shiny black suit and his embarrassed look, like he was talking to Miss Trout.

"How do you do," Mr. Wunderson said, "I'm Henry's guidance counselor. I wonder if I might not chat with you folks for a little?"

Henry bent double over the suds, felt Ezz' tough little elbow, heard his mother murmur something nice, heard Wonder man say why thank you. Then Wonder was inside, shaking hands with the Gun, sitting beside the TV. The cruddy elbow dug into his ribs; he flicked out a fist and Ezz gasped for breath; Wonder man chatted on...

"...well not exactly hookey, Mr. Strothers. More in the nature of an unofficial absence."

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"He wasn't in school," the Gunner said, "he was on the hook, dammit."

"Well as his counselor, I don't quite look at it that way."

"Which way you look at it?"

"Well as a symptom of something that goes much deeper. Below the surface, as it were."

"I go below his goddam surface..."

His mother's rocker was creaking louder, a cheerful lisp pricked his ear with "you in trouble man," and only ALCOA held steady.

"Now, Mr. Strothers," Wonder man was saying, like in the ethics unit, "you have to realize you have an unusual boy there. With a little more...understanding of his ahhh unique qualities you could view this incident in its proper context. You see in Operation Buena Vista..."

"What?"

"Operation Buena Vista. A Spanish term and most appropriate, incidentally, meaning beautiful view. We have many Puerto Rican youngsters, you know. Well, in Buena Vista, we attempt to lift our youngsters' perceptions over the horizon, so to speak. To provide meaningful experiences *outside* their life framework..."

"Mr. Wunderson, lemme explain somethin..."

"You see, this way we can lift them out of their environment. Now your son literally *thrills* to these experiences. So naturally when you denied him permission, he responded in his own terms. Miss Trout, his official, correctly perceived this and immediately brought me into the picture."

Wonder wasn't smiling, but his hands were working hard. Gunner leaned in as if he were making change.

"Mr. Wunderson," he said, "where you live?"

"Why, in Forest Hills."

"Uh huh. You come in the morning and you go back out the Island every day after school?"

"Well not *right* after. You see some of our best guidance takes place..."

"Yeah. Well Mr. Wunderson, that's nice. Very nice. Forest Hills is real nice. But we live here. All the time. See?

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You go out over that bridge every day and Henry, he still here, on this little ol rock. But *here* where he gonna make it. This *his* Bona Vista."

Wonder man began to flop his mouth like in a juvenile decency lecture. Finally he put his ideas together.

"Mr. Strothers," he said, "I have empathy for that viewpoint. Actually my living elsewhere gives me a certain valuable objectivity which, if I may say so, someone like yourself lacks. Now Mr. Strothers, one reason I'm here is to emphasize the need for involving the school *and* the home in a cooperative effort. Frankly I don't think this is your ahhh perception. And so we're faced with Henry's symptomatology. Now we have to work this through if we're to continue with the summer phase of Buena Vista. As you may know our youngsters correspond..."

"You mean his pen pal. That Lance Olsen?"

"Ahhh yes. Pen pal meaning link with a higher horizon. We attempt to structure a relationship whereby our youngsters can ahhh extricate themselves from their environmental fields and spend a summer in a fresh context. Now in Minnesota..."

"Henry in Minnesota?"

"Yes, you see, we've explored the situation with Mr. and Mrs. Olsen and..."

"You write and tell them all about Henry?"

"Well, the essentials, yes. His intellectual curiosity and his growth potential. Actually the boys themselves have made the arrangements. They seem unusually *simpatico*. And with your cooperation..."

"Mr. Wunderson, let's talk to Henry. After all *he* involved here. *Hank*."

Uh oh, Ezz digging hard again... He walked slowly into the living room and gave Wonder the big handshake they had learned in group guidance. Wonder, in return, gave him the hand on the shoulder; Gunner's mouth bent down.

"Henry," Mr. Strothers said, "tell Mr. Wunderson bout your nice ride yesterday."

"We saw a lotta stuff," he said, "Empire State, Pan American, Rockefeller, all kindsa stuff."

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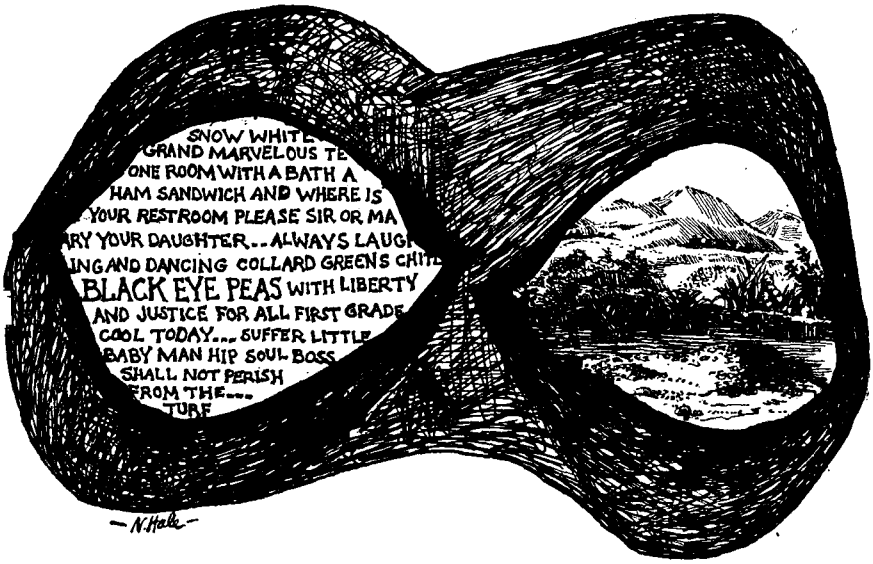
GRAND MARVELOUS TE
ONE ROOM WITH A BATH A
HAM SANDWICH AND WHERE IS
YOUR RESTROOM PLEASE SIR OR MA
RY YOUR DAUGHTER... ALWAYS LAUG
ING AND DANCING COLLARD GREENS CHIT
BLACK EYE PEAS WITH LIBERTY
AND JUSTICE FOR ALL FIRST GRADE
COOL TODAY... SUFFER LITTLE
BABY MAN HIP SOUL BOSS
SHALL NOT PERISH
FROM THE...
TUBE
— N. Hale —

"Was it intrestin, Henry?"

"Yeah."

"Henry," Wonder man said, hand light as air on the shoulder, "how do you feel about Lance and a summer in Duluth?"

What a stupid question.

"Well," he said slowly, "we gonna hit Mesabi and goin over Wisconsin and up the Big Horn. We got a schedule..."

"You see, Mr. Strothers? Do you see his involvement in terms of a fresh point of view?"

His mother's rocker had stopped and Ezz was ready to explode all over the kitchen. He felt a hand on his other shoulder, hard, tough; he played it off against the sponge.

"Why sure," Mr. Strothers said without a crack in his voice, "I want what's best for my boy, that's all. He know that. I'm all for both my boys. A hundred percent. I tell you, les jus wait an see how it goes. There's time, Mr. Wunderson. Les see."

The rough hand was suddenly warm and solid, not like the damn sponge cake. Henry looked up. His father's face

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had cooperation, understanding and emphasy stamped all over it.

Two weeks bused by. When the class went to Philadelphia to check out the Constitution, Mr. Strothers obtained legal permission to take him on a local field trip. A whispered deal got him on the Broadway 104 and he rode from 125th to the UN with Dick Ringel giving him the tour lecture. At supper he recited the itinerary while his father beamed. Then (with a "sir") he excused himself and rescued Ezz from the torture of a simple interest problem.

While Ezz chanted I equal principal time rate time time, he sat down at his kneehole and got organized. Propped against the lamp was a neat blue envelope, blue as the greatest lake on the continent. He picked it up and fingered the midwestern handwriting that practically oozed iron ore. Carefully he sliced it open.

May 20

Dear Henry,

Received your letter of May 15. Thank you very much. I am fine. Everything is about the same. Well Henry about the summer Dad is going to take us to California so I'm afraid I won't be here. I guess that changes things, but we can't help it since we'll be in California. So if you don't hear from me awhile its because we'll be getting ready.

Sincerely yours,
Lance Olsen

He read it ten times. Simple interest buzzed around him. California stunk, really stunk. Then the hard, bony hand was rubbing his head.

"He give you the business?"

He looked up into understanding and cooperation.

"Oh he got a change in plans. That's all. I'll just write him and we'll work something out."

The letter was in the tough hand, crumpling.

"They all the same," his father said. "All the same."

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"Whatchou mean, all the same?"

Mr. Strothers pulled up a chair and hunched close.

"Henry, for heavensake, snap out of it, will you? He don't want no *part* of you. That blond boy don't want no Henry Armstrong Strothers."

"Well that's somethin between Lance and me. It's probably a mistake. Don't worry, we work somethin out." Damn that Ezz, can't he *ever* learn I equals PRT. Shit how stupid can you be...

"There ain't no *mistake*. Ezz, tell him."

"What Ezz got to do with Lance?"

Ezz looked up at Mr. Strothers who nodded and Ezz smiled, the same goddam smile when he fart in bed and try to hide it.

"You mean Ezz write to Lance? That dirty little bastid."

The whine started; his father stood up.

"Hold it boy. He do it for you."

"How you figure that?"

"Well I asked..."

"*You*. Goddammit, Lance is *my* friend."

"Shoot, he's no friend. He don't want no part of you now he know what you are."

"Hell he don't. Lance don't give a shit."

"Now just calm down, Henry. Just hold it. I know this kinda rough. I know that. But you got to learn it sometime, like I been tellin you. Now just listen what I went and done for you. You know my cousin Roger in Canarsie. That's way out over in Brooklyn. I arranged it so you can spend the summer there. See. That ain't no city at all; it's wide open. And Roger he's a lectrician, he teach you a lot. Course you ain't gonna be no lectrician; you gonna be a engineer. But this give you some practical experience and you be one up on all the engineers. Come on now, Hank boy, pull with me, I pull with you."

He stared at his father and Ezz and then out the window. The bright red glow flung its answer over the Hudson. He shook his head with contempt.

"Don't you know nothin?" he said. "Brooklyn ain't even

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on the *mainland*. It's on goddam Long Island."

He lay awake very late, looking out at ALCOA. Then down at SPRY. Ezz whistling in his doublecrossing dreams across the room. Tricks, tricks, wheelin and dealin all around him, like poor ol Hamilton. He rubbed his face where his father had cracked it. Damn. Lance's father was no goddam face cracker. The rough old rasp rose out of the bed through the wall, below it his mother's soft breathing. Shit. Even she play along. Connivers. Worse than Franny Sigel. Only the red glow and Lance were firm and now Lance was all tricked up, twisted around. Damn, he wanted to yell right out. He didn't. Instead, he just got all choky. Jesus, Lance *got* to get the story. Be squared away. He looked out at Aluminum Company of AMERICA and the choke broke up. Hell yes. Whipping the covers aside, he swung out of bed. Very careful now, though the doublecrosser never wake even if the bomb drop. He dressed and took some change out of his book bank. He stuffed the balled up letter in his pocket and tiptoed out past all the trickers...

He walked over to the Drive and got the Number 5 bus right away. He dropped in fifteen pennies and felt good as the driver frowned. Tough. Then he settled back and rode for half an hour, weaving in and out, up the River, over to Broadway, along Fort Washington. At 170th he crouched for action and at 178th pulled the cord. He got out and walked a block and stopped. Above him hung the great towers and swooping out and up were the cables that spun the link across the river. It was all dark, except for the tower and the bridge lights, but sighting straight across he could see the solid mass of the mainland. And next to it, the wild loopdeloop tracing of Palisades Park.

He ran over to the pedestrian walk, took a deep breath and started across. Over the narrow pathway he ran full speed, until his legs began to tie up and his side hurt. Then he stopped, gasping for breath, and glanced down. A thousand miles below, the water glinted. He jerked his head up and looked back at the city, hot, bright and beautiful. Another

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step and he stopped. He looked ahead for the mainland; but all he could see was thick, solid black beyond the tollbooths, hard tough black stretching all the way to Minnesota.

His knees buckled. He dropped down and crawled to the inside rail. Beside it was another hole and beneath him, nothing, just the glint. The towers began to sway and the walk swung as the cars thundered past.

He clamped onto the guard rail and saw the warm bed in his room flash against his tightly squeezed eyelids, heard the snoring through the wall. Hard and solid and a hundred percent. He thought of dumb little Ezz who needed his help. Then he saw the class, *really* saw it, Isolina and Joseph and Katherine and Leandre, hanging up bright and clear, like a blown-up color shot, each one standing out sharply against the miles of nothing: Isey pink and white, Joseph brick red, Katherine coffee brown, Leandre shiny black. And he knew at last what his father meant. He knew Lance and his cruddy cold letter, somewhere out there in the blackness.

He felt lousy and began to cry and he wrapped tighter as the world took off and spun around him. He swung up and down the river like a cat froze to a high skinny pole, hung up between Duluth and 95th Street.

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To Francis Sauf Que

1

You think of everything:
Modern silence, where I go back continually
To you, as does everyone, it seems...

2

We are getting younger, perhaps

3

I "hate you hate you

4

The man walks under the house
In the Renaissance, the plum etc.

5

More data, adversity is like walking
In the sun which is shining on you
In bed, where you are with her,
"everything like that"

6

Now I love you again because of these roosters

7

Yours is topography to me in my dim head. I'm sorry, the virgins.

8

This color, orange, tries to remind me of you,
Orange slice

9

And you are

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10

Sometimes I leaped at the wrong time
Or right time, this made you who shall receive
This scarlet rose with some sort of greatness happy

11

I thought so, so you changed your fasteners.
I think I hate you more than anyone else.

12

If only you knew how to ignore me

13

Then symbolism gets a model today,
But you didn't believe in that, its flaxen gray—
And neither does the porch
More than these worth taking notes on

14

I didn't hear you when you all did it

15

I will kill you

17

To envisage your doom (it), and,
"Get with it, kid"

18

To be plucked at exactly 2:10 in the morning

19

They faded en masse onto the yearbook,
The shoelace through six years of catatonia,
Of Gerard Labrunie and this

20

So whose shadow is this, yours or mine? and why
Are there two of us here instead?

—RON PADGETT

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Evening poem - 31 oct. 64

Peace out on the land—even if it's
Halloween, and the spirits out
walking on the land, kids
in their masks, cops—it is so quiet
in the long fogged park
they are gone into the wood, into the trees'
bark, into the grass—
the lake water light holds
who the lover might be—to see
centuries—in the mirror of my toaster
in the dark kitchen I light a match
and see it go out, burn dark and glow—
the match light in the water—
What lover? I am gone half way already
into the trees' wood or the lake,
Caught blood pumping in the veins of my hand
is the same wave ripple by this shore
here, last night, every night. I would give
away anything of myself, then, and to whomever I meet
or know at all. Love, torn up body,
old jacking off or unable to touch it, unable
to go touch the loved body, it is
finally gone into the mind's back sight, behind the eyes,
kept—while I go on
lost into the things and beings of the world.

Halloween—what spirits
but the ones I already know
walk out, and speak, and are seen?
I imagine a room across town,
that is empty.
I see my own empty apartment.

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And I go out, as in tomorrow
morning I will go in fact,
tonight into the park, lapped
into the streamed fog,
hanging my arms and walking,
as the eucalyptus leaves hang, the trees walk,
streamed, hung with the fog.

Second evening poem - 31 oct. '64

To set things right—

that I am divided, do not know
any certainty of where I am—

that if the body loved
goes into the mind's back pasture
it is not from fulness and a one with the world,
but from despair

Love holds all over my naked body in the bed
going with the eyes into the trees or grass
never removes

The spirits of Love
fuck in my room
All hallows Eve.
They come to my bed

in the darkness where the eyes can see nothing,
and the body—

—KENNETH IRBY

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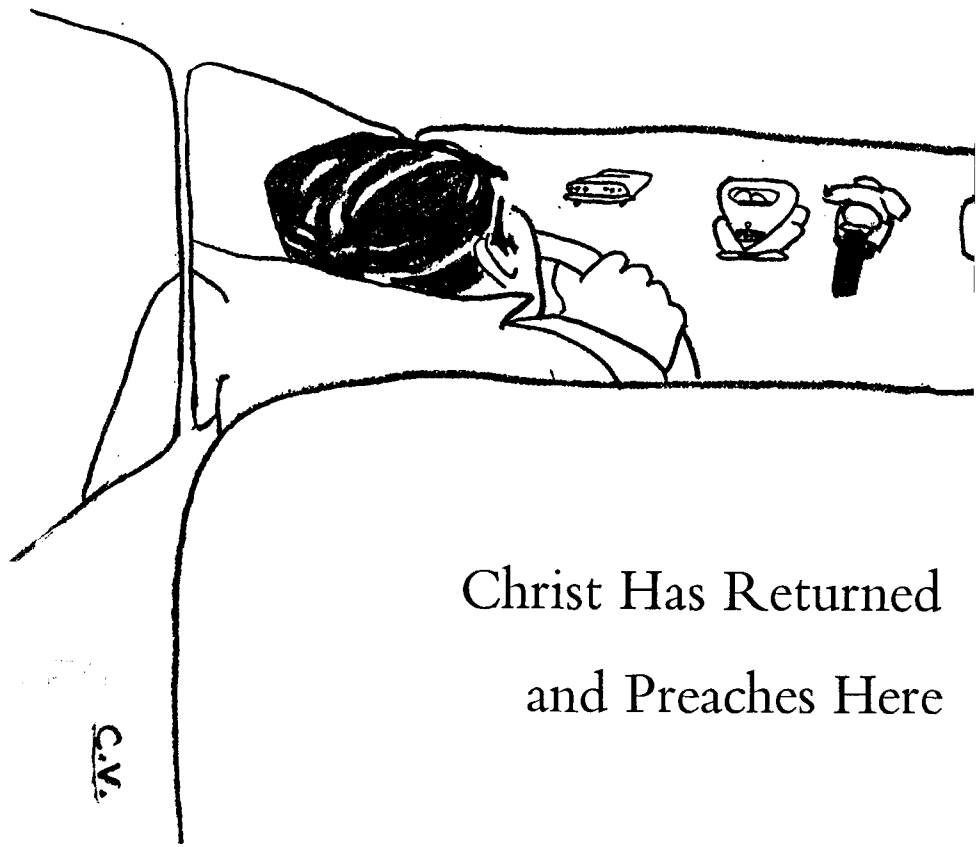

Christ Has Returned and Preaches Here

From the small, flat, hot, treeless, asphalted valley town of Tracy, California—split by a six-lane highway and surrounded by fields of sugar beets, alfalfa, and tomatoes—an enormous pink car one day departed by the eastern end without previously entering by the western end, this car being the property of a permanent resident, Ernest Grubb, nineteen, who was in turn the property of a finance company. Ernest's fingernails were rimmed in black and there were black specks imbedded in the blemishes on his cheeks. Painted on the rear fenders of the car, though it was only a week out of the show room, were the words VALENTINO RETURNS.

Sunk in the pasenger side of the front seat were the meager contours of Harry Ames, also nineteen, with a complexion

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o Earth

Nightly

Leonard Gardner

he sometimes attributed to parental malice. His fingernails were clean. He had just been removed from unemployment insurance rolls in accordance with a code section under the heading "Failure to Seek Work." Harry was taking Ernest Grubb, with Ernest furnishing the car and gas, to a rendezvous with two divorcees in the neighboring town of Stockton. Until that day he had only mentioned one divorcee (and he mentioned her at every opportunity), but now it appeared there had always been two and that he divided his attentions equally between them, which made it sound as if there were only one. Ernest felt an innate caution around friends in need of chauffeurs, but as he had yet to score anything with his new car in a week of cruising, he could not decline Harry's proposition.

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Once during that week he had almost been successful, but his passenger had passed out before he could take her anywhere. He had driven around as long as he could, waiting for her to revive, but as he had to drive a tractor early the next morning, he left her on the lawn in front of the library. Ernest had thought of leaving her in the car overnight to enjoy during his lunch hour in the fields; however, he had feared he might end up having to marry her, if she knew where he lived. Such things were known to happen in Tracy, as his father often warned him. His father himself had been discovered in front of his future in-laws' house one bright morning, asleep on the back seat of a model A Ford in only a pair of high-top shoes without socks (it was summer) beside the girl who was now the cranky, round-shouldered, double-chinned television fan for whom Ernest bought bubble-bath on Mother's Day. Divorcees were better risks; they were also anxious to regain those delights...

When he had driven no farther than a hamburger stand at the edge of town, however, Ernest had already become skeptical.

"If we can't get hold of yours right away," Harry told him, "you just wait around till I'm through and we'll go find her. She's really fine looking; I swear it."

"I thought it was all fixed up."

"It's all set," Hary assured him. "Only her mother's dying in the hospital and maybe she had to go there for something, you know, to bid farewell. You wouldn't grudge her that, would you?"

"She won't be no fun coming from her mother's death bed," Ernest complained.

Harry answered that he had to have a hamburger, and Ernest felt obligated to stop. Having done so, he was likewise obligated to pay.

The girl behind the glass, who passed the hamburgers through an opening as small as the ticket hole in a box office, refused to speak to them, as it was generally known that certain advertisements penciled on local walls, involving her name and phone number and a very low sum of money,

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were the work of Harry Ames. Advertising ran in Harry's family; his father was the proprietor of *Neon Signs*, in years past the town's first distributor of this invention that now decorated almost every yard of the bisecting highway.

As the two rode on placidly chewing, Harry said he wanted a donut, but Ernest stated they would stop no more until they picked up the divorcees. Harry alluded to loss of virility from malnutrition, then glumly stared at his tattoos. On one forearm beneath a dagger piercing his profusely bleeding skin was written DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR, and on the other, HARRY AMES and U.S.M.C. curved around the Marine Corps emblem—an anchor and the world with a boil in its northern hemisphere. He had obtained these in his thirteenth year from a Hawaiian who had come up from Stockton on a motor scooter with his needles in the tool box.

Farmers were still out irrigating, but the pickers had all come in. Butterflies and juicy bugs that had somehow eluded the divebombings of crop-dusters smacked against the windshield. Tomato lugs lay scattered between rows in the fields and Ernest, coming upon one in the road, attempted to swerve around it—without success, due to the spongy immensity of his tires. He felt the bump and with a pounding heart heard a rush of air among the cracks and clatters under the car. With resignation he thumped off onto the shoulder.

Upon inspection of the trunk, Ernest discovered that the only accessory he had not been issued was a jack, and so he and Harry were forced to stand at the edge of the road waving at passing cars. Twilight was approaching and with it the opening of the drive-in movie. Ernest and Harry were rocked back on their heels, their clothes flapping like sails, as car after car raced by with a male head behind the steering wheel and a female head so close a two-headed monster appeared to be driving. Finally a low, dull-grey sedan with flames painted on the hood hurled by in a din of loose rods. Wobbling on and off the dusty shoulder, it screeched to a stop and began backing up. A dangling plaque with THE BLOWN GASKETS emblazoned across it identified the vehicle as Count Messner's, for his was the only car in that particular automo-

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bile club. The Count stepped out followed by Joe and Wallace Pucci, their hair sweeping upward on the sides in vast glistening arcs like the wings of birds-of-paradise, and curling down over their foreheads like the necks of swans, the ends in a beak over each of their noses. The Count succeeded in prying open the handleless trunk lid and threw a jack down in the dust. Then, his thumb hooked in the fly of his Levi's, he stood in a line with the others and watched Ernest flounder with his tire. Though it was a warm valley evening and the Count and the Puccis had lived their lives in Tracy, they wore red wool jackets with

"THE BLOWN GASKETS"
"OF"
"FRISCO"

on the backs in white letters. They were—the Count explained, as the jack began to bend under the sighing corpulence of the car—on their way to Manteca to pick up Sylvia Fuller, a girl who enjoyed considerable popularity despite an I.Q. uncoveted by her rivals. As her father, a Baptist egg producer, had archaic views on dating, it was necessary for the carloads of Sylvia's admirers to honk once when passing the farm house, then continue on to a dirt road leading to an irrigation ditch with grassy banks and the seclusion of willows where, a few minutes later, Sylvia would come stumbling to them over the clods, wearing her overalls if it were daytime or her pajamas if it were night.

Ernest, screwing on the spare, was somewhat interested in this outing, but Harry assured him they had better things awaiting them. The car crashed back to earth, the Count and the Puccis returned to their flaming sedan, and when Ernest started his motor they roared away, spraying his windshield with gravel. He saw their derisive faces looking back, but as he had hundreds more miles of slow driving before his engine would be broken in, he had to watch the ash-colored car shrink away. While Harry sat in scornful silence, Ernest punched buttons on the radio until he got a good-music station to his liking. They were all good-music stations now, but some played better good-music than others.

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A sawmill of electric guitars resounded in the car, and the abdomen of a large grasshopper, clinging desperately to a windshield-wiper blade, began to pulsate.

"She better not be no pig," Ernest threatened. "I won't take just anything."

"You won't be disappointed, I promise you. If she was a pig nobody would of married her in the first place, would they?"

Ernest was not dull. He had read Shakespeare in high school—"A Midsummer Night's Dream," in *Classic Comics*—and earned an A for his report on it. He told Harry he could hitch-hike back if things were not as represented. Harry slid down in the seat and stared out of the window with his nose on the sill.

They crossed the muddy San Joaquin River, where houseboats with smoking stovepipes and clusters of rowboats were tied among the tules, and they passed grain fields and orchards, fruit stands, and packs of erotic dogs. Though Stockton was less than twenty miles from Tracy, Ernest had to stop in French Camp for minor repairs; his sputtering car had consumed a quarter-tank of gas. It died as he was attempting to cross to a station, settling in the center of the highway. After he had ground the starter several minutes with traffic swerving by on both sides, a man in a foreign sports car shouted something as he shot past.

"Come here and say that!" Ernest yelled, leaping out; then with a surge of indignant patriotism he strained against the door frame, running in place, as did Harry on the other side, until the car rolled a few inches and Ernest felt a hernia about to detonate. The station attendant, a young man with a sideburn on one side of his face and a small radio against the other, came out to assist.

In the station Ernest watched gloomily as the attendant worked under the hood with a dexterous right hand, his left still holding the radio to his ear.

"I bet you got to beat the women off it with a stick," the young man said when the hood was down again and he and Ernest were standing back gazing at the whole pink panora-

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ma, their eyes jumping apoplectically, as if viewing a pinball machine where all the balls were shot in one giant splurge.

"That's where we're going now," answered Ernest.

"Huh?"

"Divorcees."

"I might of known it," the attendant said enviously. "Huh? I hope they come through for you."

"No hoping about it," replied Ernest.

He drove on, now very anxious to meet his divorcee. He felt so deserving of her it seemed unreasonable to doubt Harry's promises. Ernest Grubb had all the qualities necessary for the successful man about town, as represented in all manner of magazines on the subject, and it would hardly make sense if they went unrewarded. Even on those occasions when he was outside his car his personal charm was magnetic, as he had once demonstrated in a truckbed full of sugar beets, where a young woman, Sylvia Fuller, had fallen hopelessly in love with him while his friends waited on the running board. He walked with his pants hung low, thumbs in his pockets, heel taps scraping, and when he spoke he mumbled just enough, with his head down and the hint of a sneer on his lips, to give him a suggestion of great suffering, of having a profound soul that had been misunderstood; and though he was swarthy and tended toward plumpness, he could nevertheless discern in his features a certain resemblance to the late James Dean.

"I'm going to make that divorcee cry for more," he said to Harry, who slipped his spine farther down the seat.

Nearing the city limits of Stockton, Ernest and Harry encountered several homemade signs—HAVE *YOU* BEEN CHOSEN? COULD YOU FACE JUDGMENT *TODAY*?—before approaching a large tent sagging next to a wrecking yard. Over the entrance of the tent a banner announced: CHRIST HAS RETURNED TO EARTH AND PREACHES HERE NIGHTLY. Harry, a student of advertising, approved it as a good gimmick.

"I wonder how they got the guy rigged up," said Ernest,

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looking over at the tent where a few dilapidated cars and pickup trucks were parked in the twilight.

"Let's stop and see," suggested Harry. "We don't have to put nothing in the plate."

When Ernest said they didn't have time, Harry assured him they were too early for their appointments. "You don't want to look eager, do you?"

"I'm not eager. I'm just in a hurry."

"But they won't be ready! You get what I mean? I'll have to call and say we're coming early."

"That's okay."

Harry ran his fingers down his face. "Turn in here then, and I'll use their phone."

"There wouldn't be no phone in a revival tent."

"Sure there would. Hurry up, turn! Turn!"

Flustered by Harry's urgency, Ernest turned with misgivings onto the dirt driveway.

"I don't see no wires," Harry Ames said after they had climbed out. "I'll tell you what—I'll take the car into town and get the divorcees while you're watching the show, and we'll all come back here and pick you up. How's that?"

"I'll go with you," Ernest answered flatly.

"Well, hell, we might as well see what's going on then," Harry mumbled, kicking the dust.

As they entered the tent, a preacher under a gasoline lantern shouted to them in a ringing tenor. "He's not here yet, folks." Long black hair, evidently combed over his bald spot before the sermon, hung down over one ear to his collar. The hair on the other side of his head was clipped short. "But just be patient. He's coming. I got the word from Christ himself that He's coming, and He won't let us down. No He won't. When I was uptown today I talked with Him myself—yes I did, I talked with Jesus—and He told me definitely He would be here in this meeting tent tonight to talk to all you good people and come into your hearts, and I know He will, because He don't lie. No, friends, Jesus Christ don't lie—no He don't, no question about that—and He'll be here among us shortly to make us all singing saints

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in the sixties. I think I can feel Him coming now, folks; I think I can, and you'll feel Him, too—yes you will—if you'll just let yourselves. Won't you let yourselves feel Jesus?"

"Let's get out of here," whispered Ernest, who had at least expected someone in sandals from San Francisco. "There isn't going to be any guy, can't you see what he means? You're supposed to *feel* Him."

When Harry said they had better wait and see, Ernest knew it was a stall; if he waited until this Christ came he never would find out about the divorcees.

As the preacher talked on, the rumble of an approaching motorcycle grew outside, finally coming to an idle near the tent flap, then flaring up into one last thunderous blast while the preacher's mouth worked like silent machinery; and when the roar died away he was wailing: "O, I feel Him, He's coming, I hear Him, yes indeed I feel Him coming." As he rocked on his heels with closed eyes and saliva gleaming on his chin, the congregation—turkey-necked men in overalls, children and stoop-shouldered woman—turned toward the entrance.

A young man in a leather jacket, with a small goatee like armpit hair on the end of his chin, came in and walked unsteadily to the front. Across his back was painted BALLS O' FIRE.

"I feel Him coming," the preacher gasped, arms flapping. "To spread His gospel, yes, His blessed assurance."

The motorcyclist shambled up beside him. Then, spreading his arms, he addressed the congregation, "Verily I say unto you." Knees buckling, sighing, the preacher swooned backward. His head clanged into the collection plate; he lay still. Women moaned and shrieked; one slumped back in her chair speaking words unknown to mortal man.

"Let me talk," the motorcyclist interrupted, raising a hand, light sparkling off the chromium studs of his jacket. "Peace! Verily I am the Christ our Lord, let me tell you. And if none of you believe it you better read up on your Bible, because now I've come whether nobody expected me or not, and I can see by the size of our gathering that not too many

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did. Well, that's all right. Each man's salvation is up to him. Ye butter your bread and then ye must lay in it. But I could tell by your humble cars outside—all except one that's a vehicle of sin if I ever seen one—that you're the chosen ones. I know you lived clean and righteous lives by looking in your weary faces. And don't think you're going to be forgotten for your sacrifices, because right now, here in this tent tonight, is the Last Judgment. No need telling your friends and neighbors to come tomorrow; they're just out of luck. Only those that were here to greet me have earned them berths up in paradise."

There were cries of spiritual ecstasy; a woman fell on all fours howling like a polka-dot dog with rimless glasses; children wailed in confusion; and a gangling red-haired man was on his knees pleading: "Let me go home and get my daughter. My teen-age daughter, she's led a sinful life." Ernest, recognizing him as LeRoy Fuller, of Fuller's Eggs, Grade B Dirties, and the father of Sylvia, hunched down in his folding chair.

"We don't want no fallen women with us On High, man," replied the motorcyclist. "I bet you're the one that owns that big pink car out there, aren't you?"

"No sir, no, I don't," LeRoy Fuller protested. "No, no, just an old pickup—bad tires—won't you please wait while I get her?"

"Verily, like I said, only the people that happen to be here get in on the deal, out of all the peoples on the four corners of the earth, see? That's the way things go." He raised his hand to quiet the tumult. "Hark! I ask ye to be quiet, all right? I'll leave you now. Preaching can't do no more when you're as pure like unto a new born lamb and destined for Old Glory. Go in peace to your eternal reward."

He strode out of the tent, and LeRoy Fuller sprawled on the ground sobbing: "If I'd only brung her." Uncomfortable, Ernest left just as the motorcycle roared off. It was dark outside now, and he saw the single headlight rushing toward Stockton.

"You'd think they'd of dressed him up better than that,"

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said Harry when he came out. People were leaving the tent babbling and crooning. "It'll be by lightning." "The Bible said by fire." "The sun will collide with the earth." "The sun's already set, though." "I think the Lord will most likely drop a big hydrogen bomb." "Look! I can see Stockton burning."

When the preacher came out holding the back of his neck and asking what had happened, everybody answered at once. "Are you sure?" he said in a cautious, puzzled tone, stroking the long sparse hairs back over the skin of his head. "You didn't just hear His words? What did He look like?"

"He had a beard."

"Had a *beard*?" he shouted, steadying himself on a tent rope. "What have I done, brothers and sisters? A *beard*! A materialization—God bless you—of the Holy Ghost, amen, His most sacred heart, His lofty brow..."

"My daughter's been doing bad things," LeRoy Fuller interrupted, and Ernest crept toward his car.

"Bring her, that her wound may be healed, that she may never again tread the path of sin—no never—and bring a newspaper reporter. Dearly beloved friends, I'm on my way to bigger things—yes I am, I can see that—a great crusade with string ensemble, to save Los Angeles, the juvenile delinquents, the moving picture industry..."

As LeRoy Fuller was knocking his shins against the running board of his pickup truck, marked on the door with the name of his business, and on the hood and fenders with verifications by the hens themselves, Ernest and Harry departed.

LeRoy Fuller, and a covering of dust over the car, had depressed Ernest and when, at the edge of town, Harry returned from a phone booth with regrets that Ernest's divorcee was not home, Ernest mumbled that they were going right back to Tracy.

"No, no," protested Harry. "She left a message with her mother for you to meet her later at my divorcee's place. She said to be sure and wait for her."

Recalling that her mother was at the moment dying in the hospital, Ernest prepared to make a U-turn.

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"Just give me an hour," Harry pleaded. "That's all I ask."

Harry Ames' appeal for women was famous. His legend could be found recorded in numerous lavatories with lists of mysterious names often included; still his arsenal of charms lacked that major one Ernest had so recently acquired. And so Ernest decided to win the remaining divorcee for himself. As he continued into town, the folds subsided from Harry's forehead.

Stockton, being larger than Tracy, has more recreational facilities available to its young people; there were youth clubs passing along the sidewalk in gayly decorated jackets—THE GUTBUSTERS, THE NUTCRACKERS, THE SKULLS—looking for civic services to perform; and drag races were being conducted in the streets, with three or four cars abreast, and a policeman often officiating from the rear. Ernest, too, was invited to enter one of these, finding himself at a stop signal between two crushed-down cars recognizable only as HITLER'S REVENGE and THE BOUDOIR. The hunched drivers peered up at him through six-inch windows, shouting monosyllabic challenges above the eruptions of their mufflers. But Ernest had to let them, too, screech away without him. He proceeded with ardent limbs and just a trace of shame to the divorcee's residence—a room, in a transient hotel, that remained silent after five minutes of pounding. "Maybe she's not home," he suggested, but Harry, calling and kicking, shook the door until an old man with warts and slippers puffed up the stairs to request that Ernest and Harry go elsewhere.

They drove to the bar where the divorcee was employed, in case by some miscalculation she was working on her day off. Crowds of Filipino asparagus cutters and Mexican nationals in sombreros milled on the sidewalks, and winos were against cars and walls and down in doorways. Ernest parked well away from the bottle-lined gutter, locked all the doors, walked around the car checking them, and then followed Harry into the *Club Aguascalientes*.

In the gloom a crowd of men stood around a lone woman on a bar stool. Harry, out of the side of his mouth, requested

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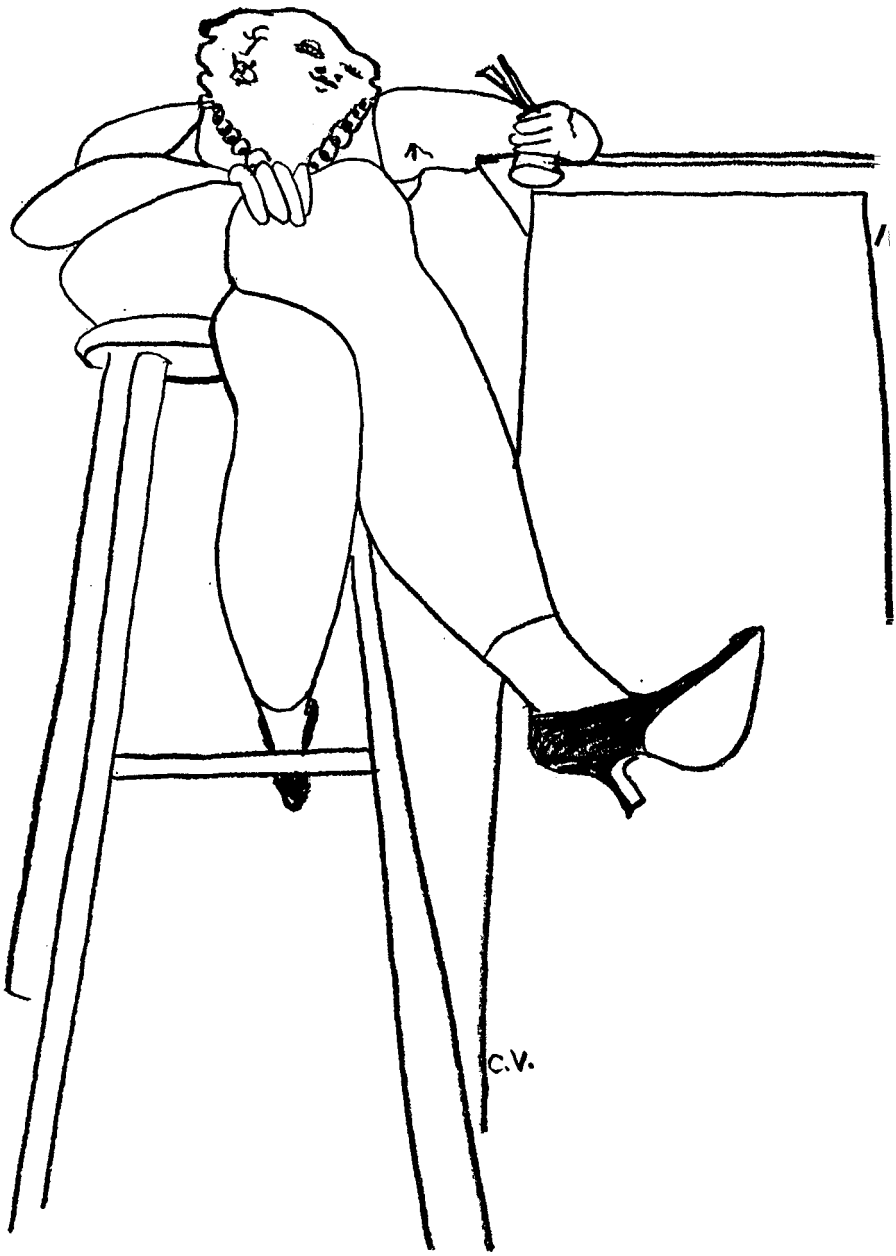

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that Ernest not mention the other divorcee, as his divorcee knew nothing about her. "I don't want to make her jealous," he explained, then pushed in among the crowd. Following, Ernest tripped over boots and was jabbed by the leather elbows of the BALLS O' FIRE motorcycle club.

"Hello, sweetie," Harry said. "Did you forget we had a date?"

The woman had orange hair, a blood-red dress, pink high heels with white bobbysocks, and a pallid face that had fallen into hammock-like pouches. She squinted at him. "Who's that, anyhow?"

"It's me, sweetie—Harry."

"Harry who? Step over in the light, why don't you?"

"Harry Ames, your date and steady," he said in a rising voice as he shoved in closer.

"Watch it, man," somebody warned.

"Oh, it's you, honey. Why didn't you say so? Who's that with you?"

"Ernest Grubb, this is April Humphrey, the Georgia Peach."

"I got a brand new car outside," said Ernest. "You want to take a ride in it?"

Harry inquired about his date, but the motorcyclists seemed to grow impatient; he and Ernest were squeezed out to the edge of the crowd.

"She used to be in burlesque," confided Harry, and Ernest thought he might have seen her at the *Liberty*, there in Stockton, on an evening past. He recalled several women with orange hair, and faces that swung and flapped as much as their breasts and buttocks as they wiggled, tottered, stamped and quivered out of time with the music.

When Ernest and Harry had writhed back to April Humphrey, who was necking with one of the motorcyclists, the bartender demanded their I.D. cards. Slowly they took out their wallets and went through the pantomime of searching for cards that must somehow have been misplaced. "It's here somewhere," Harry said. "Come on, sweetie, let's get out of here."

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"Let's you and me sneak off for a ride in my new car—alone," Ernest whispered in her ear, careful not to say it in the motorcyclist's.

Her lipless mouth, surrounded by a liberal red smear, puckered tenderly as she declined. "I'm sorry, honey, can't you see I'm working?" She held up a highball and began swallowing.

"How about afterwards?" Harry asked with a note of desperation, while the motorcyclist nibbled her dewlap.

"Better make it some other time, honey."

A boot heel mashed down on Ernest's toes; when he squirmed to free himself he was cracked under the chin by a five-starred epaulet. "You better fade, man," somebody muttered beside him, and someone else in a loud voice said, "Minors." The bartender then ordered Ernest and Harry out, and as they hung their heads and stalled, mumbling about pickpockets, they were grasped around the shoulders and waists and hauled protesting to the doorway, the tips of their toes dragging along the floor. Ernest felt a foot against his spine just before he was catapulted out into the night. Stumbling over a reclining man, he fell to the pavement. As he wobbled to his hands and knees, the jukebox inside began to play.

Harry was sitting on the sidewalk with his pants leg rolled up examining his knee. Near him a woman in a black bonnet and dress, with a canvas satchel hanging from her shoulder, held up a magazine, *Awake!*

"There been signs and portents," she moaned to Ernest. "A horse give birth to a chicken tonight, and Jesus Christ was seen at a revival meeting just outside town in his flowing robes and crown of thorns, walking on water. Are you ready for the end, young man?" She thrust the magazine at Ernest, and he yelled "No!" as he stumbled up against the car, trying to get the key in the lock. "Has your soul been purified?" He scrambled inside. Harry limped over and joined him, and Ernest started the motor with the woman's nose pressed against the window and her frantic voice ringing in his ears. "Tomorrow's too late!"

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A band was playing on the corner as Ernest stopped at the signal. Above the thuds and bleats, an old man jangling a tambourine was hysterically chanting that the world was coming to an end. Winos and farm laborers leaning against darkened store fronts gave no signs of caring, which seemed to make the man more desperate. He began to plead. Several BALLS O' FIRE motorcyclists parked by the curb were heckling, and one of them Ernest recognized. From his sneer, it also seemed he recognized Ernest's car as the one he had denounced at the revival.

"Didn't that thing get you up there yet?" he yelled. Crouching for a fast start with his goatee jutting forward, he raced his motor. When the signal changed, Ernest bitterly roared off beside him with screaming tires. They buzzed up the block side by side, shot through the next intersection, then, as the motorcycle pulled ahead, a sudden great clamor of blacksmith banging commenced in Ernest's engine. He applied the brakes, his face going pale and his heart seeming to sink out of him.

Slumped over the wheel, too sick to speak, he drove slowly out of town. When the car passed the lot where the revival had been, the tent was already gone. A small gathering of patient people were still waiting by lantern light, their failing voices raised in song.

Banging and clattering, the car crept on, past fields, orchards, and lighted farm houses, over the black river, finally making it back to the tremendous asphalt slab between the glare of Tracy's neon. Ernest drove straight to his unlit house and told Harry he could walk home. Leaving him complaining in the car, he trudged through the weeds to his back door.

But Ernest did not open it; in the night's immense emptiness the thought of his bed was more than he could bear. Instead, he crouched behind a shrub and peered through the leaves at the car. The interior light came on as Harry stepped out, then went off with a slam. Ernest remained among the twigs long after the horseshoe heels had faded off down the sidewalk.

A limpness had overcome Ernest. When he returned to the

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street it was with a desolation that frightened him.

He drove out of town, and as he neared Manteca the feeling seemed to lessen, and to his relief it lessened still more when, knocking past moonlit chicken pens, he gave his horn a short decorous honk. The feeling continued to grow less as he bounced over the ruts of a dirt road, and then, by the willows, as he watched the pajama-clad figure coming toward him across the field, it was gone altogether.

POEM

The doorbell so
Lost
    in the wall, the telephone

So black so white
Tonight

What? stops it, some

Un-impatient space, not
A potential.

—ARAM SAROYAN

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THREE POEMS BY LARRY EIGNER

I.

Homer playing
violin
as he could have,
anachronism
some idea
a picture with a man's name
time is when light seems blind
presence
a mind tending
upon a window
since a few clouds
are somewhere, or more
gathering perceptibly
the slow more
hands take
the right shade
there's always a corner
space become enough
to grope about
the wind leaves
a sound may turn the wood
who knows the singing
the potential
realized
is instrumentation
like the precision deriving from light
blind amorphous water
passes
the empty ocean
a large glass, simple
corners
he had a voice

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2.

to open your ears
real music
on the wire sparrows
or any other birds
sit still
their world dimensional
more than dogs or cats
or perhaps men
and listen
a moment of stillness
stick in the ear
a beginning and origin
attachment
of flight
before the sea's exertion
to trace the appearing moon
or stormy as it may be
an afternoon rain
how long it can seem to last
I think it's over there
the sky through the trees
I recall passing through them, many
branches and leaves too
begin time
is present
the moon increases night
water sparingly
a new fathom
a table crickets
unendingly surface
the field cut back
different tympanum
I imagine it shining

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3.

Ikebana

natural abstraction
what flowers those that are
arranged that way

earth man and heaven
stretching air
sometimes, as taking off

a dancer a wall
a hedge going up bamboo
lengths and knots
are painting

as of a surface
long enough grass
for the sky

—LARRY EIGNER

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The problem of the poem for my daughter, left unsolved

The darkness rings.
the surface form
of the face, a halo
of the face,
as it passes away in the air as she moves
between the buildings, a cut
surrounding her throat, the pearls
of the price she'll never have to insist
she paid
a thin line red with its own distinction
some goiter
of what she has been made to understand is civilization
not the brand of the adventurous cutlass

The misery is superficial now.
I have dwelt on that quality in other poems
without attention to the obvious
drain
of social definition
the oblivious process
of a brutal economic calculus, where to
place the dark hair
save about moist eyes
the black slacks,
the desperately optimistic rouge of the fallen cheeks
(cheeks are up
when they live
both forward *and*
posterior, the colorado of new day not a new state...
where the leads are I despair to find lead mines

In the chronically vast complex
explanation, a field true,
but a field hand knows

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beyond the produce of it
on some citizen's land, the horizons
sheer the top
of the head of the man
who is bent
bent is an attitude
I've settled on now
to define a man
whose attention is forced down
a class, distracted, not a stratum
detained from what the reaper called attention
might harvest, O false shift of season
in a vacation
but how slow, and seasonal
and the poem is an instrument of intellection
thus a condition
of the simultaneous
so the woman and myself, pass,
and her message bears a huge meanness
"the measureless crudity of the States"

A world where no thing thrives short of the total pestilence
of its spirit, and because there is no intelligence short
of the total there is no intelligence, none. There is not even one
intelligence in the land, children see the capitol of things
shifted to disneyland, no misery
which does not know all misery,
as an eye of knowledge, contrary to happiness
that quite exclusive short range and burst, as it happens
a birthday party, my daughter's. I had gone to the supermarket
for ice cream. and saw the shocked woman

We call the intersection of time
and event the
devastation of a fortune cake
all answers pulled out
of the standard of living which is that cake
no standard is cake

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a provided nation
is no standard, rather a thorn
in the side of a more careful world
her pain affirmed (all men and women
who suffer deeply, in any way, are not
cannot be U.S. Citizens, no matter where
they live. They may live in Indiana
she carried no standard,
as I saw her: impossible to be a citizen
there is no such thing anywhere, in any country.
I could have shot her down, had she been a marine.
And leaving the scene, and the legal questions
not one male canaanite would have come forward
She was no phoenician raped broad,
there are never any ships parked by the bannock county court house
this woman was sometime willingly captured by another,
a sort of community, her husband, if she is fortunate enough to possess one
is probably a masonic reservist.

No woman is Helena
unless the culture has provided for the passage of pain
and no people can construct the delicacies of culture
until they imagine Helena, merely fucking in the middle
of the atlantic on the SS United States is not it, is procurement
while the full-sized poodle whines in the kennel above
back of the forward stack, the echo of the sound he makes in Berkeley
where the hippest member of the minority group as it was reported
arrived in a sports car and there it was, white, with a beret
wearing shades, sitting beside the driver, looking with disdain
on a small cur who trotted along the curb and stopped
for one brief moment of curiosity and then resumed
his policing of the bases of parking meters

These United States.
have sent forth women, hopeless divorcees,
the wrinkled millionairesses of resources dwindled
to a day dream, the exhausted mesaba of their dangling breasts
soft wax structures to support our collectively ceaseless greed

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for legitimate youth, but divided states do not create women,
Amelia Earhart
was not carried off, she flew, like something familiarly
transvestite in us, a weirdly technical Icarus
she was sent for by some morse-code spiritism, this land
was never more than the bitter hardness of nouns for us
her destiny was not qualified by myth
She came in all her beauty
to a small green island
in a bag of metal, oh misfortune that to be exemplary is so difficult
she could have been a goddess because she flew, other women
marked by sex, fold out of the minds of American men
who may no longer wear the bottoms of their trousers rolled
but who are certainly all circumcised without ritual
and wear the ends of their penises rolled
and always assure their dentists they are masturbators:
the paraphanalia
of an existence, thus a human phenomenon, culture-less
(pop culture,
technologically provisioned
(those are collections of people grasping nothing
the women are
set loose to walk spiritless
their marks are deep cuts on the neck, moist eyes, sagging nylons
eyes painted to dry everything, loose figures of despair
or hard flesh prolonged by injections and tucks into an isolated youngness
a manufactured Galateability
The end
of applied genetics will be
the elimination of freely disposed
intellection, via the rule
that a science is oriented toward
Use, some predictable
breed, is the end
Automation ends with a moral proposition, THE LESSON of
the maximus factor of it
will suggest all the correspondances:
mail food ads

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the attractive stuffing
from McCalls and House Beautiful
to Havana
during any season
of famine, therefore those people will hunger more
(which people?
the natural seedbed of that morality
is plague, and all such endeavor
instructs one to move our daughters
to some green island
in the sea, we are so far from Galilee
The sum of her
shall perish, has begun
in the prescribed field of misery
and she will hardly avoid the destruction
of her nature,
a material of birth
as a car of new life
not new, novel, the life
is older than that we know as prima materia
And soon when there is no need
for waitresses, or telephones, doctors' wives
and automobilists, they wither
on their still green vine, no more tears
to water life, no more varicose veins
the Kaddish will be said
not as a formal memory
but for the working of a curse, venus
will be likewise a disease transmitted for a secure experience
a memory of Eve for some isolated engineer
who said if I don't do it, someone else will
A man,
in that framed condition
of some totally onanized culture, who will
transmit with the bills of requisition
the bill that held Leda off the ground
in that throbbing moment when she saw histories of the future
in the bright feathers, knew the spines of
that ancient creature in her thighs

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the engineer's note:
Send me a little syphilis this month,
I have been reading
some old books

and in that sense
there is no loss to *a* man
of his earlier knowledge,
a yawn simply defines the brink of availability:

Hello there Ed, congratulations!
I've forgotten the *de*tails
but it sounded *fabulous*!

It is the night of the opening
of the new art-grocerystore and all the shoppers
were discussing theology, a science which has no subject-matter,
something about the indistinguishability of environment where all
the mistakes of logic create a different object, something
without tears, something

as I get it less like
the terrestrial entry a cave or
less similar volcano than woman
something omitting holes
a specifically anti metaphorical being
like a man protruding, an extension
no intention, space is still conceived
(as surrounding: infinity is the inability
to conceive, the collapse
of surrounding,
female principle was structure
before and somewhat after the opening
of the art-grocerystore

So tears, or the rose enfolds
the moisture of its passion
the girl my daughter, 14 today
and such eyes, all interior, a proud thing
born in 1951, not yet bestowed with any curse, she is
Chansonette, a woman, hopefully, for nomads

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a principle older than man, a running out
the tear dropped into an earth rapidly drying tonight,
the disappearance instant
into the most unimaginable laundromat, the danger
a wholly adjectival father might worry over
in the nest of the most corroded notion thus far: America!
of how men might, if they were noble
behave in their last moments we barely speak
except for the relatively sour hope that some nineteenth century
and romantically singular form of bloodletting
be reinstated because the man in the street hears a choir
of pioneers' voices and thinks of brigadiers when a rightist is hurt
where he sits on the porch of his finca faraway

or of how we might
plead our case in the face of Sartre's observation
that this is a nation where those who care
are the damned of the earth, *running* I will add
before the furious nations who snap at our heels
with a momentum of the centuries, and I stand
behind the pane at my window one of those hopeless men, some silly
toscanini
leading the symphony
in the street, directing the movements, I do so know
all the scores by heart, by a memory
saturated with defeat, where crisis and alienation
are no more new than any other condition but were always
bred in this strewn and used land, no cultural tricks of assimilation
to form a cover,

bunchgrass is an isolated cover,
has a slight brief flower,
and I can tell my daughter no secret.

—EDWARD DORN

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Dizzy Gillespie

An Interview

John Birks ("Dizzy") Gillespie was born in Cheraw, South Carolina, in 1917. Like most southern Negroes of his generation, he received little formal education. After becoming a professional musician at the age of eighteen, he worked in the trumpet sections of a series of swing bands during the prewar years, and was soon recognized by jazz musicians as a talented but eccentric young soloist. During the early forties, in New York, he developed—along with a handful of other young musicians including alto-saxophonist Charlie Parker, pianist Thelonius Monk, and drummer Kenny Clarke—new melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic concepts that were to become the basis of almost all modern jazz.

The new music, called "bop", was far more difficult than any jazz style which preceded it. Its improvised melodic lines were long, asymmetrical, and complex, and the fairly simple chords of earlier jazz were extended by the addition of extra notes which sounded dissonant to the uninitiated ear. Most jazz soloists improvise over a harmonic foundation consisting of a set series of chords supplied by the tune being played; the bop musicians developed methods of replacing, during improvisation, certain chords with other "substitute" chords whose implications were more sophisticated. They also used "passing" chords inserted between the customary chords of the series in order to make the harmonic structure more flexible and complex. The most radical innovations, however, were rhythmic. Bop musicians took unprecedented liberties with the beat, creating dislocated rhythmic patterns which at first baffled older musicians who tried to play them.

These developments were at first indifferently received by the public (jazz, of course, was thought to be light entertainment, not art), and regarded with either amusement or outright hostility by many critics and older musicians. For several years Gillespie and Parker were at the center of a heated jazz-world controversy comparable to that stimulated decades earlier in concert music by Igor Stravinsky. The road to public acceptance was not smoothed by the fact that some bop players were not only obscure Harlemites, but also defensively hostile to their audiences, hiding behind beards, dark glasses, and an in-group language.

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But during the forties Gillespie matured into a soloist as creative and influential as Louis Armstrong or Roy Eldridge had been during the twenties and thirties. He also developed unprecedented technical skill on his instrument, probably superior to that of any trumpeter, jazz or classical, before him. Today he remains one of the world's finest trumpet virtuosi as well as one of the most important improvisers in jazz.

He is a shrewd man and, like Louis Armstrong before him, has long since come to terms with the compromises that face any creative jazz musician functioning, willy-nilly, in the entertainment field. His appearances today blend music and showmanship (he is as fine a clown as a musician) in a combination which irritates people sensitive to the still shaky status of jazz as a recognized art form, but which does draw nightclub audiences of enviable size. His singing and gag routines have enlarged his audience, but they have not, as so often happens, been accompanied by a musical decline. Several times during a good evening Gillespie will stand back, abolish the drinkers and talkers in his audience, and play a solo of such richness and brilliance that there can be no doubt as to his continued greatness as a musician.

Now long past the years which earned him his nickname, he lives with his wife Lorraine, a former dancer, in the bottom floor of a three-story house he owns in Queens, Long Island; he rents out the top floors. The interview took place in a low-beamed basement room equipped with a piano, a bar, and easy chairs. High-fidelity equipment (including two tape recorders) and many records filled low shelves around the walls. Above those hung an assortment of musical mementos and trophies. A fine large chess set, pieces still deployed in some unfinished game, stood before one chair. A card table by the piano bore music manuscripts, incidental correspondence, and a copy of I. F. Stone's Weekly.

On the afternoon of the interview Gillespie was wearing a dark turtleneck sweater and horn-rimmed glasses. He is a man of medium height and build, once lean, but now thickening. He still wears a trace of a goatee, and his face is widened by the powerful neck, cheek, and lip muscles of a trumpeter. It is a face in constant motion, to which Gillespie can attach any expression that suits him, the most famous being the one of vacant, smiling idiocy that he frequently uses on nightclub audiences. During the interview he smoked a large, curved pipe. He sometimes stood up and walked around, but usually sat leaning forward, gesturing with his hands, or back at ease, legs crossed.

Interviewer: What sort of a place was Cheraw, where you grew up? Was there any music there which interested you when you were little?
Gillespie: It was just a little bit of a town, about five thousand people. The kind of music I heard first was gospel music. My father was a musician. But he had a lot of children, and you can't make a living as a musician in South Carolina, especially in a small town like that, so he actually worked as a brickmaker. But he used to play for all the functions, and he had all the instruments. What they were actually

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playing, I don't know, because I was so small, but as long back as I can remember I used to see instruments all over the house—bass, clarinet, mandolin, drums, piano. He played them all.

Interviewer: How old were you when you started learning trumpet?

Gillespie: About twelve and a half. When I was little, you know, they wouldn't give me a horn. The bigger ones got the instruments first. I started with trombone, but there was a boy next door, Brother Harrington, and his father bought him a trumpet. It was one of those long, long... what kind of metal was that? It wasn't silver, it wasn't brass. Nickel plate! An old nickel plate trumpet. We used to have a hard time, you know. Making too much noise with it, we had to run from this house to that one. But I stuck with that; until I got a trumpet I'd practice on his.

My father had a bass, and I taught my cousin how to play it. It had only one string on it. I made a mark on it like a fret, and you'd just hit that mark and tune the thing until you got to B flat. I could only play in B flat at that time. I was becoming popular in my home town, playing for all the little high schools and things like that, and I remember one time a guy named Sonny Matthews came home. He wanted to find out about this little Gillespie boy. His mother was a former music teacher, so he could read and play like hell. So I went down to see him with the school horn, and he says, "Well, what can you play?" I said, "I... don't know..." So he said, "Do you know *Nagasaki*?" I said I knew it, so he started playing. But he was in the key of C, and damn! I didn't find *one* note on *Nagasaki*. That's how I found out! Before that I didn't even *know* there were other keys besides B flat. Soon after that my cousin, Norman Poe, started to learn how to read music. Norman and I would get together, and he'd teach me the values of the notes.

I was sixteen when I left Cheraw. I got a scholarship to Laurinburg in 1932 or 1933, and I stayed there two years. It was a full scholarship, for sports and music. Not to study music, to play. They took for granted I could play. I really got into it then. We played marches and things like that. Norman and I got the scholarship together, and with Norman we played things like *Casa Loma Stomp*, *Wild Goose Chase*, *Milneburg Joys* and W. C. Handy tunes. They had a trombone player there, Bill MacNeil, who was very good, but he never did learn how to read. He got killed. Some white people caught him, killed him, and put him on a railroad track. All that talent. He reminded me of J. C. Higginbotham—that kind of trombone. Fiery. But by the time I left Laurinburg I could read.

Interviewer: Where did you go then, and how did you start working as a musician?

Gillespie: I went to Philadelphia. When I got there, my brother-in-law bought me a horn, and I got a little job making eight dollars a week down there, in a little dive. Then I got another job, making twelve dollars a week, up on South Street, with three pieces—trumpet,

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piano, and drums. We'd play standards. Then Frankie Fairfax offered me a job. But I'd never read from manuscript paper; I'd just read printed stock orchestrations. They dropped this music in front of me, and, boy, to me the rests looked just like the notes. I was reading the rests, and the tails on the notes, and everything. They *swore* I couldn't read. I didn't get that job, but I did play with Frankie Fairfax later on.

Interviewer: Your first important job was with Teddy Hill, wasn't it?

Gillespie: Yes. The band was going to Europe. Frankie Newton did not want to go, so Teddy asked me. We stayed in Europe nine weeks, I think it was. I had to have my mother sign an affidavit because I wasn't twenty-one. When I got back I played with Edgar Hayes, Claude Hopkins, Fletcher Henderson, and then I went with Cab Calloway in thirty-nine. I went all around. I must have played with sixteen or twenty big bands, and all of them were different. All the different colored bands had a different style of playing, so when you went into a band you had to adapt yourself to that style, and it gave you some different experience. The white players didn't have that problem. There was no mixing in the bands at that time, you know. There were some very popular instructors the white guys all studied with, like Merle Johnson, an instructor for reed instruments. All the white guys went to Merle Johnson. Therefore, when you put together a white saxophone section, for instance, you got all Merle Johnson students, and they played alike, and could blend together right away.

Interviewer: Did the older musicians in the bands help you much?

Gillespie: Not at that time. The only older guy I can remember really helping me was Bill Dillard, a trumpet player in Teddy Hill's band. He helped me a whole lot. I had just come up from Philadelphia, and I wasn't used to playing in the big bands. I didn't know about the finer points of playing in trumpet sections. I could play fairly good solos—like Roy Eldridge, you know; he was the great influence on trumpet then, and I used to copy all his solos—but Bill Dillard would sit me down and say, "Now look. You have to match your vibrato to the section. You can do it anyway you think best. You might want to do it with your hand; we all do it with the hand." And so on.

Interviewer: Do many musicians come to *you* now for help?

Gillespie: Oh yes, yes. Piano players, bass players, saxophone players —all of them. They call me, and come over to my house to work.

Interviewer: Didn't you also make your first records when you were with Teddy Hill?

Gillespie: Yes, just before we went to Europe. I had a couple of solos, on *Blue Rhythm Fantasy* and *King Porter Stomp*. O-oh, I was *nervous!*

Interviewer: How do they sound to you today? Like Roy Eldridge?

Gillespie: Of course. Roy was the *strongest* influence. I made a record with Lionel Hampton in 1939, called *Hot Mallets*, and on that I sounded so much like Roy, Roy thought it was him!

Interviewer: Now, I'd like to ask about the beginning of modern jazz

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and your part in it. When did you first begin to experiment with new chords, new rhythms, and so on?

Gillespie: I always did: I almost always did. I always did like chords. I used the piano to get them, and I used the trumpet to play what I could figure out on the piano. I was practicing all the time. But there *was* a definite cutaway in my playing. I started trying substitute chords in, oh, 1937, when I was with Cab Calloway. I was finding chords which threw a different light on the whole sound.

Interviewer: Did you study harmony formally?

Gillespie: Not formally, no; just *there*, on the piano. I've done quite a bit of studying, but by myself and with guys like Thelonius Monk.

Interviewer: Were your ideas about harmony influenced by concert music—Stravinsky or other composers of that generation?

Gillespie: It's possible, but it didn't come directly. At that time I hadn't heard much. I knew *The Rite of Spring*; I became interested in that when I saw *Fantasia*. That was the first time I heard it.

Interviewer: How did Cab Calloway and the musicians in the band react to your experiments?

Gillespie: They didn't dig it. Only a few guys, like Milt Hinton and Danny Barker. The rest of them said, "Nice little fellow, but..." So I used to get together with some other trumpet players—Benny Harris, Charlie Shavers, and little Bobby Moore.

Interviewer: When did those famous sessions begin at clubs like Minton's and Monroe's, where the younger musicians used to get together?

Gillespie: I don't know what year Monroe's opened. Teddy Hill started Minton's about 1939. They had a house band—Monk, Nick Trenton, somebody named Scottie, and Joe Guy, four pieces. Everybody else used to just come and sit in and play. There were always musicians coming around to learn something, to exchange ideas. Everybody would be saying, "Have you tried this? Have you tried this?" First it was in harmony. Then when Chano Pozo came on the scene, in the late forties, it started in rhythm. Then they'd be saying, "Have you tried three against five? Or two against seven?" That doesn't go on so much any more. Everybody's so busy. There's a need for it, though. Music is so infinite that you only get a little bit of it, even if you spend twenty-four hours a day at it. Then Charlie Parker came in the early forties. He excited everybody.

Interviewer: Did you find that you and he had been working along the same lines?

Gillespie: Not necessarily. At first we stressed different things. I was more for chord variations, and he was more for melody, I think. But when we got together each influenced the other. I first heard him in Kansas City. We went up to the hotel room, and he used the piano to explain what he was doing. We spent the whole day playing and discussing.

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Interviewer: What do you think were the most important differences between earlier jazz and the music you, Parker, Monk, and the others were developing?

Gillespie: Well, chords. And we stressed different accents in the rhythms. But I'm reluctant to say that anything is *the* difference between our music of the early forties and the music before that, of the thirties. You can get records from the early days and hear guys doing the same things. It just kept changing a little bit more; one guy would play a phrase one way, and another guy would come along and do something else with it. It was a revolution in a sense, but it was more of an evolution. Charlie Parker was very, very melodic; guys could copy his things quite a bit. Monk was one of the founders of the movement too, but his playing, my playing, and Charlie Parker's playing were altogether different.

Monk is the one who has been less influenced by other musicians than anybody else in modern jazz. You see, it's very easy to be influenced by a great musician, especially if you play with him a while. They tend to influence one another; you find one playing a lot of things the other is playing, and you don't know which one played it first. But when you hear Monk, you just hear Monk. He's unique. He'll take an idea and develop it so you won't even recognize it.

About the harmony—some guys really ran some of our ideas into the ground. A lot of times something just isn't suitable, you know? They didn't use it with any taste. I think the *basic* part of jazz is rhythm and you should delve into that. But, you see, the trouble is that a lot of guys can't keep time. I mean that they can't see two or three rhythms going at once, so all they can do is mess with the chords.

Interviewer: Could you clarify the statement that what is most important in jazz is rhythm? Some people think jazz is rhythmically simple, or primitive. All they hear is the steady beat, and nothing else.

Gillespie: I'm not talking about that! Rhythmic content means how you *accent*, where your accents are, and how they fit in with different types of rhythm. You can't notate it for them; they have to be able to hear it. You can come close, but you can't really write jazz. For instance, if you want to holler or something—sometimes they're not even *notes*. Like a lot of things Charlie Parker played. And Ornette Coleman today, sometimes he doesn't play *notes*; it's like somebody hollering. He's also got the idea he doesn't want to be restricted by chords. It's like in art, in painting today. Of course, there was a time when there *were* no chords in music; it was all horizontal, so I wouldn't knock the guy whether I understand what he's doing or not. Who am I to say? People think Ornette Coleman is weird, but we went through the same thing ourselves. When I first took my own group onto 52nd Street, in '44, playing our own music, people used to ask us, "What is *that* crap? What is that Chinese music?" Even musicians used to come back and say, "*What*?" Even the musicians that started our kind of music, like

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Kenny Clarke, would come back and say, "Man, that's too fast for me; I can't make that."

Interviewer: Didn't the public pay less attention to the music at that time than to the fads that seemed to go along with it—like the beards, hip talk, dark glasses, and so on?

Gillespie: That's always been that way. Let me tell you how some people are. I went to Chicago one time with an African tarboosh I used to wear—a kind of little hat. Well, the *next* time I went to Chicago I didn't wear the hat, and during the course of that engagement at least two hundred people asked me, "Where's your little hat?" They came *especially* to see the little hat I had on. They had no worries about the music. Can you imagine the mentality of somebody who comes not to hear somebody play, but to see a little hat? There it is!

Interviewer: Do you think that on the whole audiences in clubs have improved during the last ten or fifteen years?

Gillespie: In some places. The public is about to catch up with us now. When we first came out with this music, the people would say, "What *is* that?" But now many musicians are playing it, and even in the backgrounds to vocals, popular tunes, our little things are in there. The people's ears have become accustomed to it, and it doesn't seem as far out.

Interviewer: Usually you handle audiences with gags, comedy routines, and so on, as well as music, right?

Gillespie: That helps, you know. It helps to draw attention to the music, anyway. If you want to make a living you got to do something, because otherwise you'll never even be *heard.* Jazz players just have to entertain people too, aside from their listening. Let me tell you. I walk on the stage before a set, and I say, "Now I'd like to introduce the musicians in the band." Then I introduce the musicians to *one another.* That gets the people in a better frame of mind to listen to your music than if you went at them cold and bam! hit them with it. It relaxes them. But it has nothing to do with the music at all. It's just entertainment. I don't sacrifice musical taste.

Interviewer: How do you feel about doing these comedy routines?

Gillespie: Well, now it's part of my life. If I were playing for the Pope, he'd have to go through with it and laugh now and then. Anyway, jazz is supposed to go through all the emotions. It should be so sad it sometimes makes you want to cry, and it should make you laugh sometimes. But it should all be right in the music. Sonny Rollins is particularly funny. Some of the things he plays cut me up. I always wonder what he could have been thinking about. It's funny, and it's *good* when it's funny.

Interviewer: Do you think that this audience problem, along with all the economic and racial frustrations, was one of the things that caused so many musicians to take refuge in narcotics during the forties?

Gillespie: You'll have to ask them that. I'm not going to say anything

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about what goes on in somebody's mind. But some of them went to narcotics just because their idols did. They would emulate everything about the artist: his walk, his dress, his habits, bad ones and good ones —but mostly the bad ones.

Interviewer: What do you think of the view current among many colored musicians, that whites can't play jazz as well?

Gillespie: Well, it has some standing, but color of the skin has nothing to do with it. I wouldn't talk in those terms, but in terms of ethnic background. White people couldn't just jump into jazz, which we created. They just didn't have the background, like gospel music and the blues. Our ears were attuned to *that*, and we put it right into the music. Even when we got into the modern harmonies, it was still there. When they say it's inherent in colored people, that's bullshit. Some can't even do *this. (Taps his foot.)* I've told *many* colored musicians, "Boy, you sure are letting it down, what they say about colored people! You sure are *blasting* it!"

Interviewer: Why is it, then, that so many Negro educators and writers have been slow to claim jazz as part of their cultural heritage?

Gillespie: That's the fault of the society in which we live. Eenie meenie miney mo, catch a nigger by his toe. A lot of colored people are ashamed. They're not taught the dignity of their heritage. A few years ago, if I were to start playing the blues, a guy, a colored guy, might walk up to me and say, "The blues? *You*, playing the *blues*?" So I'd have to say, "What's *wrong* with it? This is my own music; this is our music. What do you mean, why am I playing the blues? Are you out of your mind?" You know, I've never been one to turn my back on my ethnic background. I've never been ashamed of being of African descent. But a lot of colored people are ashamed; the society has made them ashamed to be black.

Interviewer: What do you miss most about those days back on 52nd Street?

Gillespie: We miss the sessions. Musicians don't go around playing informally any more. They don't jam. You hardly ever hear jazz that isn't arranged now. Our group plays arrangements—we don't jam—so if a musician came up to me and wanted to sit in while we were working, I'd have to tell him to get lost. Only the big stars are able to sit in.

Interviewer: Do you prefer it that way?

Gillespie: Well, at this point in my career it's better, because the customers expect arrangements now. And there's always a lot of room for improvisation in the solos. Actually all the arranging in jazz is inspired by the soloists, not the other way around. The soloist is the one who thinks up all these things and plays them, and the arranger hears it and copies it. But a lot of soloists play the same things all the time.

Interviewer: You've been playing for more than twenty years now; what about the problem of having to get up and improvise night after

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night?

Gillespie: I never get bored. No, no! Sometimes I go on a job, and all my solos are things that I've never played before. It takes complete concentration. Of course, some nights you're just complacent. You do some new things, but... you see, there's thousands of ways to play on any chord. You have to figure it out in a split second and play it at the same time. It's not instinct. It's hard! But when you've been playing as long as I have, a lot of things just play themselves. A C-seventh chord is coming up, and when you get there it just comes out. It's very easy to get stuck in a groove that way. You do things that people like, so you keep doing them, and you're in a rut.

Interviewer: What inspires you to improvise well?

Gillespie: The rhythm section is the main thing.

Interviewer: Do you have trouble finding good musicians?

Gillespie: It takes some time for a guy to understand me and what I want completely. I don't tell them what to do; I just tell them what *not* to do—strike out the things that are not in good taste. And that's a whole lot! I do tell them some general things. For instance, when I'm running, I don't want any bombs dropping in the rhythm section—just straight rhythm. But when I leave an opening, I want an answer. When I'm playing with a mute, I want brushes behind me—on the snare drum, not the cymbal. And when I'm playing open, I have my own special cymbal, so there's no problem with the sound. As a matter of fact, I have the cymbal Cozy Cole gave me years ago. I conned it out of him, and he's been trying to get it back for five years.

Interviewer: Are there any other things that inspire you, besides what the rhythm section does?

Gillespie: The instrument—when the instrument does everything that you attempt to do with it. Sometimes, say, a valve might stick a little, and if you want to do something it doesn't come out in time. Then you're in trouble, because when you think of something to play you have to discard it, because that valve won't come up in time.

Interviewer: Do you remember any times you were particularly satisfied with your own playing?

Gillespie: You're never satisfied. You get into that ethereal groove—if you're lucky—maybe only six or seven times in your whole career, times when everything is, well, *easy*. I guess I probably played my best with Charlie Parker. He would inspire you; he'd *make* you play. And he always used to play before I did, so I had to follow him.

Interviewer: Did competition on that level ever cause jealousy or strained relations?

Gillespie: No, it makes you better. You appreciate the guy better, and it inspires *you* to do more.

Interviewer: How could you tell whether Charlie Parker appreciated something you were playing?

Gillespie: Well, while you were playing he'd be saying, "*Yeah! Ye-*

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ah! Ehhh!" Let me tell you about one time Charlie Parker went to hear Segovia in Paris. They got him a seat right up in front, and every time Segovia played something especially good, Charlie Parker would say, "*Ehhh!*" and Segovia would hear him and look up, and when something else went by Parker would say, "*Ehhh!*" again. Well, Segovia finally looked down there and saw him, and he didn't dig; he didn't know what this reaction was. So finally they took Charlie Parker back to meet him, and when he saw them bringing this guy back that had been making all the noise, he was sort of cold, you know? But when they introduced him to Charlie Parker, aw! It was lovely then! Because he knew it must have been something that really struck Charlie Parker's ear.

Interviewer: He knew about Charlie Parker, then?

Gillespie: Oh, of course. All those guys know about the great jazz musicians. Well, it's that kind of thing that inspires you to do more. If you can elicit a grunt from a great musician when you're on the bandstand, if you can elicit anything from him at all, then you try more, you really try!

Interviewer: One final question. Do you have any thoughts about the course your playing may take in the future?

Gillespie: The best I can do for the future is to keep trying to play something different. My playing does change. I listen to my records and hear things have changed. I could have played better. Sometimes I think, oh, that was in *ba-ad* taste. As you get older, all you have to go on is your own taste, and the experience of playing. So when a new idea comes to me, I try to build on that idea. I can't prescribe rules, and say that the music is going to go this way or that way, so many degrees here, so many degrees there. I play to please myself first, and then hope it will strike the ear of somebody.

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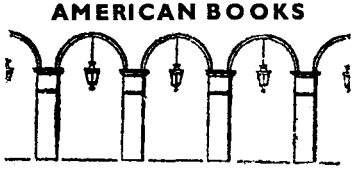
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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FICTION

Irvin Faust *(Operation Buena Vista)* is the author of the recently published *Roar Lion Roar*. He has had stories in *The Carleton Miscellany*, *Transatlantic Review*, *San Francisco Review Annual*, and *Saturday Evening Post*, in addition to his story "Philco Baby" which appeared in THE PARIS REVIEW # 31. He lives in New York and is currently finishing a novel.

Leonard Gardner *(Christ Has Returned to Earth and Preaches Here Nightly)* attended San Francisco State College, in whose literary magazine this story first appeared. It won *The Saturday Review* contest two years ago. The author is now living and writing in San Francisco.

Clancy Sigal *(Dr. Marfa)* is the author of *Going Away* and *Weekend in Dinlock*. He has lived in England since 1956. The present story is part of a longer work, excerpts from which will appear in future issues.

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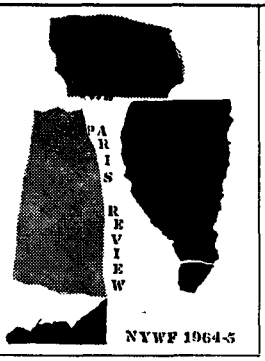

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INTERVIEWS

Conrad Knickerbocker *(Interview with William Burroughs)* was born in Berlin in 1929 and educated at Harvard. His introduction to Malcolm Lowry's "Lunar Caustic" appeared in THE PARIS REVIEW # 29; he is now working on a biography of Lowry. He lives in Kansas City, and is a contributor to *Esquire*, *Life*, *Book Week*, and other periodicals. His short story, "Pay Day", recently appeared in *Black Humor*, an anthology.

Maitland Edey, Jr. *(Interview with Dizzy Gillespie)* is a musician currently studying at the Berklee School of Music in Boston, where he will soon join the faculty. He has contributed to *The Saturday Review*, *The Jazz Review*, and the *American Record Guide*.

CHRONICLES

William Burroughs *(St. Louis Return)* now lives in New York. He describes some of his life in the interview in this issue. Two books, *The Naked Lunch* and *Nova Express*, have been published in America.

ART

Bernard Cohen *(Drawing for* THE PARIS REVIEW *1965)* was born in London in 1933, studied in various art schools in England, and was awarded a French government traveling fellowship in 1954–55. He has taught in several London art schools, and his paintings have been shown at Gimpel Fils and the Kasmin Gallery there. He has paintings in major collections in England, Ireland, and the United States. He will be represented in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1966.

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POETRY

Robin Blaser was born in 1925. He lives in San Francisco. His book, *The Moth Poem*, was published by Open Space Press in 1964.

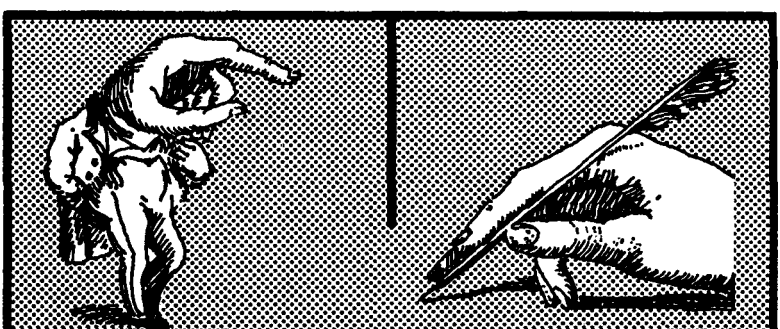
Edward Dorn is the author of *The Newly Fallen* and *Hands Up!* Another collection of poems, *Geography*, will be published in 1965. He has also written a novel, *Rites of Passage*. Dorn is now moving from Idaho to England on a Fulbright grant.

Larry Eigner has published criticism and stories in *Kulchur*, *The Black Mountain Review*, and *Origin*, and poems in many magazines, most recently in *Poetry*. He lives in Swampscott, Massachusetts.

Elaine Feinstein founded the magazine *Prospect* in Cambridge, England, some years ago. She is married and teaches modern literature in Cambridge.

Kenneth Irby is now living in San Francisco. His poems have appeared recently in *Wild Dog* and *Poetry*.

Ron Padgett was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1942. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, "*C*," *Lines*, *Mother* and other magazines. A book of his poems, *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, was published by "C" Press in 1964. He is now in New York, at work on two novels.



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Tom Pickard is nineteen. He lives in Newcastle, England, where he edits *King Ida's Watch-Chain*, and holds poetry readings in Morden Tower. He is married and has one child.

Aram Saroyan was born in 1941. His work, along with that of two other poets, appears in the Arcadia Press chapbook *Poems* (1963). He lives in New York, and edits the magazine *Lines*.

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Christine Chagnoux the cover artist, attended the Ecole Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in her native Paris, where she is now doing free-lance work. She has had four expositions, two of them in New York.

Nathan Cabot Hale *(Illustrations for "Operation Buena Vista")* is a sculptor who works mainly in welded bronze, a writer on aesthetics, a teacher, and an illustrator. He has had one-man shows in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles; in New York, he is represented by the Midtown Galleries.

Carolyn Voigt *(Illustrations for "Christ Has Returned...")* is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. Until recently she was on the staff of a New York publishing company. She is now doing free-lance illustrating and design.

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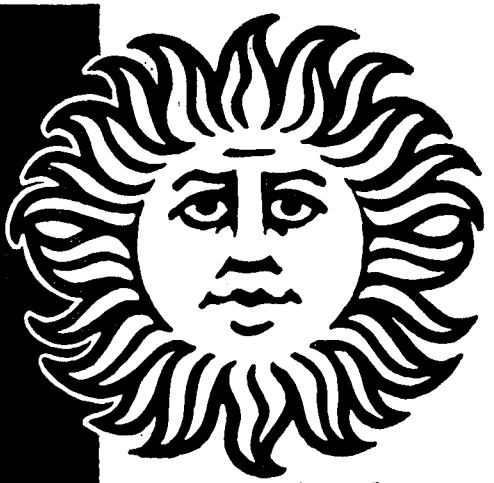

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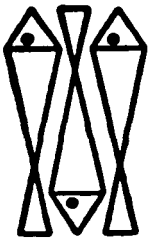

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